

A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION
No.17
March 1987
£1
AMTIX!
SOFTWARE REVIEW FOR THE
AMSTRAD
COMPUTERS
THE ALL SINGING, ALL DANCING
Little Computer People
EXCLUSIVE
PREVIEWS –
Dragon's Lair II,
Throne of Fire,
Trap,
Dr Livingstone
WIN!
A GHETTO BLASTER
A COMPACT DISC PLAYER
MAPPED
INFODROID
FIRELORD



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Printed in England by **Carlisle Web Offset Ltd,** Newtown Trading Estate, Carlisle, Cumbria CA2 7NR
Member of the BPCC Group
Colour Origination by **Scan Studios** Wallace Road, London N1

Distributed by COMAG, Tavistock Road, West Drayton, Middx UB7 7QE

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Cover by Oliver Frey

HOT STUFF FOR MARCH

THE MAIN HEADINGS

SPECIAL TREATS FOR MARCH

CRAZY COMPETITIONS!

We've got something special for you next issue – find out what it is in the April edition on sale the 5th of March.



MORE CHANGES TO THE COVER!

What's this I hear you say! You have changed the cover again. Correct but it's really all your fault. For some time now readers have been suggesting more prominence should be given to the word, Amstrad, on the cover, and at last I have been able to persuade Oliver to carry out the necessary artwork.

A RE-THINK ON RATINGS

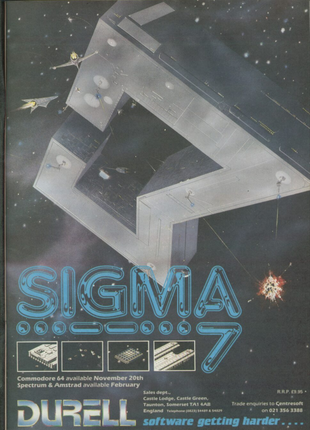
As I write we're just coming to the end of another busy schedule. It's been quite a hectic month one way or another – what with the Amstrad show and all that followed after. There's also been a fair number of new games arriving at the Towers. Unfortunately of the 29 that arrived only one made it to the top, *Little Computer People* – and even that isn't a game in the strictest sense of the word! However, we did give *Dragon's Lair* and *Football Fortunes* a more space than is usually allocated to a review because the team felt they deserved it. Sadly, the vast majority of games all appeared mediocre, let's hope the situation changes for the next issue.

Richard and Massimo have been wandering around for a few days with a big "think bubble" above their heads. The reason? Well, it's these Accolades . . . Since the beginning they've only been awarded to games that top 90% on the "Overall" mark. From now on that's being dropped! We're going to become more flexible – in future Accolades won't necessarily have to get 90% overall – they can gleefully hover around 85% and upwards and still earn a coveted award. However, as another measure of greatness we are introducing the three page Accolade, starting this issue.

Games which really impress the team will be given a highly detailed review – you'll notice this with LCP which also includes the absolutely official detailed guide to an LCP abode on the following page. By including this service we hope to be able to give you a fairer assessment of excellent games, which in turn should help you, the reader, decide whether or not to buy any particular game.

GAMES REVIEWED

ADVERTISERS' INDEX



ON THE SPOT

CHEAP PAGES?

The snow has hit Ludlow! It's horrible. All white and cold. The water pipes have frozen up, the heating's on the blink and my garden is in a right state – the whole place is just falling apart at the seams. Ho hum. Before we go any further with the letters I would just like to add my fourpenny worth to a reply to a letter in another Amstrad magazine. The letter asked the magazine why it fails to run many competitions. The reply stated, and I quote, "We don't want to flood you with cheap easy-to-produce pages that give no information or entertainment . . . "Competitions are not 'cheap'. Just take one example in this issue – the LCP comp – 75 copies of a £14.95 disk game! That's well over £1,100 worth of prizes for one comp! As for entertainment I think that can hardly be applicable to our competitions. But then again, they may just be referring to their competitions. Over to you . . .

THE PRICE OF LEATHER

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Dear Saffron,
Forgive me for I have sinned: in a moment of weakness I purchased an inferior magazine because they offered me a free tape (well you pay 50p extra for the mag). After flicking through the pages I found that it wasn't anywhere as good as Amtix!

Anyway the real reason for writing is about a review that appeared in the adventure column of Issue 14. The review in question was *Leather Goddesses of Phobos* and it stated that it retailed for £14.95. So I saved up and waited for my local software store to get hold of a copy. When they did eventually get hold of it the price was £24.95 which was much more than I could afford. I feel that the minion responsible should be severely broilied for this, as I was very disappointed.

Luckily, whilst in the store I saw *Konami's Coin-op hits* and I purchased that instead: it's fab (well with the exception of *Green Beret*).

B Gibson, Waterlooville, Hants

Oh dear. Oh deary me. What a mistake! Well, I suppose you could forgive Rob Steel our mad adventure man just this once, as he is fairly new to the job. After all we're only human. Anyway, I'm glad you found a compilation you are pleased with in the end. As a way of making it up to you I'm sending you £20 from Malcolm's beer fund and awarding your epistle the honourable title of Letter Of The Month.
ST



A PRICE PLEA

Dear Saffron,
The quality of software is on the increase for Amstrad machines. Games like *Eidolon* and *Tempest* show us the Amstrad's power and capabilities.

Gone are the days of **Amsoft** and **Ocean**. Paying £8.95 or a tenner for a game is a traumatic experience for some so I have developed my new system. Take heed software houses! I believe that games prices should be developed to, say, £5.95 at the most. This would stamp out piracy, because everyone would buy the original because of its low price. Thus, software houses would do as much trade as they have always done – maybe even more. Think of it.

I Purchased a great budget release from **Code Masters** - *Terra Cognita*. It's brilliant, brilliant work from Stephen Curtis – author of *Into Oblivion*, *Nonterraqueous*, and *1942* - **Elite**'s awful attempt at a game, a programming feat which I would be ashamed of, and at 9.95! fume!.

Richard Spence, Hillsborough, Co Down, Northern Ireland

Your view on prices is one shared by many readers – if only the solution was so simple! Software houses just aren't convinced that they would sell lots more games at £5.95 – it costs just as much to duplicate, package and ship a game whatever the selling price but the amount the software house receives (to cover all the development work and investment) is directly proportional to the selling price. It isn't economical to produce a complicated game that requires a lot of development time and then sell it for much less than 'full price'. Or so the argument goes. Maybe one day things will change . . .

I'm glad you're pleased with Code Master's product. They've got another three games out this month all of which look pretty good and well worth checking out. Your thoughts on *1942* are echoed by the team . . . as you'll see when you read the review this issue.
ST

LATE NIGHTS

Dear Saffy, my darling (oops sorry),
I have written at least 40 letters and none of them have been printed. If you don't print this letter I won't read your magazine any more (that's a serious threat).

In the January issue you stated that you and your team stayed up writing the magazine till 10.15 pm at night. Well I just want you to know I stay up until 11.00 pm some nights writing to you in the hope that my letters, yes mine, will be printed in the most important part of the AMTIX! magazine, On the Spot.

Jonathan Cale, Exeter, Devon.

Now there's no need to threaten me like that. Of course I'll print your letters. It's nice to think that you spend that much time sending your scrawls to me. Very flattering.
ST

CHARTING OPINIONS

Dear Saffron
Heeerres my top five software companies:
1) **Gremlin Graphics**. All of their games have been of a very high quality, and there has been a good few of them.
2) **Elite**. *Ikari Warriors* is fast, great, and most of **Elite**'s other games have been quite good. Keep it up!
3) **Mikro-Gen**. Never a bad game, one of the few independent software house left.
4) **Gargoyle Games**. A good reputation for good arcade adventures, but at last they have released an arcade game (*Lightforce*).
5) **Durell**. The team from Somerset continue to come up with great games, all of which are innovative. There you have it! Back to the letter. I do not mind paying £9.95 for a game so long as it is good. **US Gold** in my opinion deserve all the stick they get, and more for all their £9.95 rip-offs (*Infiltrator*, *Return to Oz*, *Zorro*, *Dambusters* etc.) I just hope *Super Cycle* will as good as the Commodore version.

Why can't companies provide key define options on their games? **Mastertronic** Key Combinations are awful (and I do have a joystick).

Thanks for listening
Jon Russell

Anyone else out there like to send in their Top Five software houses?
ST

LOOKING FOR AN OASIS

Dear Saffron
Congratulations on a much improved AMTIX!: since Issue 11 the mag has improved in both quality and quantity.

Now for the nitty-gritty part of the letter. Could you please prod the guys (and gals) at **Oasis** with your brolly? I wrote off to them in September about some problems with *Laser Basic* but they have not yet replied. I even sent the card at the back of the manual. About a month back I wrote another letter to complain but had it promptly sent back with no reply! strange hey! Have they moved? If so, to where? I am very annoyed because I now have no reply card necessary to write to them. I know that these large companies are hard to run but I spent two hours at **Electric Dreams** and they seemed to cope.

Another thing is why can't you make your scoreboard bigger and cover a wider range of games, like in Crash and Zzap?

Did you know that in Europe there are many top quality programs which may never come over here. I have several, such as *Zaxxon*, *3D Moonbuggy*, *Boulderdash 3*, *Robbot* (from **ERE**) and *Grand Prix 500cc* (like *Pitstop 2* but with motorbikes). In Europe they also tend to release games much quicker – I managed to get *Gladiator* (groan) about June/July and *Camelot Warriors* about October.
Ricardo Sueiras, Lymington, Hants

From the top . . . Oasis are now owned by the Ocean IQ label. So you're probably better of writing to Ocean – Gary Bracey to be precise. If he can't help you he'll put you in touch with someone who can. A larger scoreboard is an idea I'll put to Gordon (Mr sophisticated) Druce who takes over as Art Director this month. On the subject of foreign games *500 cc* is here! Well, just. It's coming over courtesy of Loriciels via Activision and if Activision hadn't been snowed up it would have been reviewed in this month's issue. Next month, we promise. Honest.

The European connection sounds interesting – maybe I should brollie Crumbly into sending me on a fact-finding mission. I've always fancied visiting Paris in the Springtime!
ST

THANK-YOU LETTER

Dear Ms Saffron Trevaskis
I couldn't believe it when a small brown parcel actually dropped through my letterbox containing the prize I had won about six months before. The competition in question was your 'LACCY BAND' competition. Thanks to **Design Design** anyway.

Looking back into last month's software I saw *Beach Head II* which from your review certainly looked a disgrace. How can **US Gold** and a lot of other software companies produce such useless software? Where was the programmer taught? Teachers at our school have written better programs than this. Why don't software houses get some kids to test games out before they release them? We are the people who buy their programs so we would be the best people to criticise them.

Thanks to **Beau Jolly** who have brought out some brilliant compilations. Thanks also go to **Elite** and **Activision** who have brought out some really megga games. Your magazine has really improved over the last few months (especially the logo, I couldn't stand the last one). There are still a few things you could still do to improve the magazine though:

a) Lengthen AMTIPS
b) Shorten AMTECH, but bring back LETTERTECH
c) Increase adventure section. (Even though I don't like playing adventures I like reading the reviews.

Thanks for the Mega Mag,
Andrew Webster, Keyworth, Notts

What a polite fellow you are Andrew! It'd be a good thing if a few more of the residents of AMTIX! Towers had such good manners – I regularly have to brollie that rude fellow Dick Eddie and the ignorant Techno Tony to remind them that 'please' and 'thank you' actually exist and are words that should be used regularly.

Our Doc Martened Publishing Executive has decreed that we should run an AMTIX! questionnaire very soon to find out a bit more about what readers like and dislike about our magazine. (They do the same thing over on CRASH and ZZAP! every year.) I expect everyone to vote for my sections of the magazine or I'll have to place a bulk brollie order, buy a Railcard and start travelling the country paying readers little visits. . . .
ST

CUT PRICE PROBLEMS

Dear Saffy,
I am not a regular reader of your column as I own a Spectrum, so I am usually found reading a copy of CRASH. However, after reading the AMTIX! (December issue) borrowed from a friendly 'Amster' of the label, John Murray (there, you've got a mention now John!) I noticed you put out a plea for people who had been messed about by a software company to write in. Well, I am one of the many victims!

I sent an order for *Pentagram* to **Cut Price Software** ages ago. Just after ordering it I found I had won a copy of the game in a competition. I wrote to them asking them to cancel my order and give me my money back. No money appeared, so I asked them again, and again. Finally *Pentagram* appeared through my post box, so I sent it back to them with a nice letter saying how I would like my money back and giving a full explanation.

Still no reply or £7.45, so I sent them numerous letters in a plea to get back my hard-earned cash. When I finally sent a letter by Recorded Delivery they sent back my letter saying simply that they had not received the game. I know there is not much chance of getting my money back now, but I would like to pass on the details of my dealings with CPS because I'm not very happy.

There, that's let off some steam.
John Hay, Evelix, Dornoch

Hmm. It does sound like a rather unfortunate tale which seems to have a lot to do with bad timing. CPS probably aren't under any obligation to refund your money just because you've changed your mind about buying Pentagram. If the cassette didn't load, or was damaged, then you could argue that it was not of merchantable quality and demand a refund under the terms of the Sale of Goods Act.

Changing your mind after you've bought something doesn't automatically entitle you to take it back to the shop and get a full refund. A credit note might be forthcoming, but as far as I know the supplier doesn't have an obligation to issue a refund.

There are some naughty people in the world who try to 'borrow' games from shops and mail order companies so they can pirate them and suppliers are getting a bit wary of changing games and giving refunds. If CPS didn't receive your copy of *Pentagram* I can understand them refusing to give you a refund – I always send important things through the post by Recorded Delivery as it only cost an extra twenty pee and saves this sort of argument. Thanks for your views, oh CRASH person.
ST

A QUESTION OF ART

Dear Saffron,
I am quite new to the world of Amstrad computers. In fact I have only owned my 464 for two and a half months, so I was wondering if you could answer the following questions for me:

1) What is the cheapest decent disk drive available for the 464?

2) Is it worth buying a colour TV modulator?

3) What is the best art program available?

4) Where can I contact the best (ie cheapest) software hiring firm?

5) Why was there an advert for *Super Soccer*, which is only available for the Spectrum on page 107 of the Xmas edition of AMTIX?

6) What do you do with all your games after the reviews?

7) Can I have them?

8) Does this letter earn the star letter spot?

9) Where did you buy your brolly?

Simon Machell, Wallasey, Wirral
PS I think the new logo is brilliant, much better than the old one.

To save time and space let's get straight down to business . . .

1. Tony says you can only buy the Amstrad disk drive and it costs £99.

2. Yes. You can generally pick one up for about seventy quid.

3. If you wait a month there's the *Advanced Art Studio* from Rainbird coming out. Rich took a look at it and it's pretty good. However, it's only for the 6128.

4. I'm not sure. However some magazines carry adverts for them.

5. Big mistake by the production department. They've been severely brollied . . .

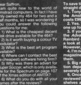
6. Once the games have been reviewed they sit on several shelves above Rich's desk and are used again for testing POKEs and maps for the tips.

7. No.

8. Some hope!

9. Woolworths £4.99.

ST



Dear Saffron
I think you're fantastic, great and brilliant. But enough of the lies . . . er, I mean compliments . . . on to the gist of my letter. When I wrote to your esteemed magazine before and praised **Ambyte**, I got a nice sarcastic reply all about 'who the heck are Ambyte?'. Well, I'll tell you, Ambyte are a great company, who, if your order combines two games which add up to £15.00, will allow you to buy games on disk at the tape prices. For example I bought *Bounder*, *Winter Games* and *Finders Keepers* for £21.00. As you can see from that, you can buy **Mastertronic** games, **Firebird** budget games and fantastic games like *Spindizzy* and *Bounder*.

Secondly, I claim 'golden goof' of the month: just what is *HOSTS 'N' GOBLINS? (Page 108, Issue 16.)*

Why the proliferation of Alien 8 type games in the Christmas Issue (I counted seven).

Well, that's all for now.

Paul Robinson, Brentwood, Essex

Oh, THAT Ambyte! They sound jolly good and in fact Crumbly's ex partner in crime at AMTIX! Towers, Jeremy Spencer, has a lot to do with the discount disk dealers. I don't suppose the fact that you live in Brentwood, Ambyte's home town, means you have anything to do with them?

Feel free to be the Golden Goof for March Paul!

There were a lot of 3D games around Christmas. Obviously companies feel people enjoy them.

ST

SEEING STARS ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Dear Saffron
I was greatly surprised at the letter from John Mason in your Christmas Special with regards to those Blue Stars of **US Gold** and your calendar. as I am also one of the nutters to think this could be on the up and up; as I saved these Blue Stars and wasted postage on sending the calendar full of Blue Stars only to receive a letter from **US Gold** stating I have to have their Red ones also. Well I have quite a few of **US Gold**'s games and I have never seen any Red Stars (only when I hit my head on the table!) so what about the true explanation?

I am not going to grovel to get this printed (that's why I am writing this and not putting it on my Epson Printer) as I have always enjoyed AMTIX!

Stan Fowell, Dagenham, Essex

It would appear that you are another reader that feels cheated by US Gold and their red star gift system. Unfortunately, there's not a great deal I can actively do apart from give you space to air your complaint. Try getting in touch with Richard Tidsall at US Gold informing him which US Gold products you have bought over the past year – maybe he will help you out.

ST

LETTER FROM SUNNY NEW ZEALAND

Dear AMTIX!
It's not all plain sailing down in little New Zealand. We didn't start getting AMTIX!, Amstrad Action and Computing with the Amstrad (sorry to mention them) here until Issue 7, and then when the shops do get them in, they're like gold – not many of them and hard to get.

Amstrads have almost taken over here and at least five schools in Auckland now have them. They have been on television and every computer shop sells them (whereas Spectrums are well and truly dead here ((dig dig)). So how about exporting some more so us poor ex-colonials don't miss out!

Another point about your magazine. It is now December when I'm writing this, and I'm reading the latest edition here, September – that's 3 months' delay. No chance of entering competitions, and all the reviews are old hat. So, if you do publish this letter, I won't be able to read it until about April or May 1987! (the Pony Express was faster!)

Now on to the subject of software. It may interest you to know that at present I have 300 games, on disk and tape, and that 90% of them are copied. It's not that there's no laws here against it, it's just that nobody wants to enforce them, pirates here have built up a kind of Mafia set up, where we have a club meetings and pirate masses of software. I try to keep up with the latest titles and have every one of your games in the top 20! My favourite is *Lightforce*: excellent graphics and sound and really addictive.

The main reason for all this hacking is the price: an average disk game costs 60 dollars and a good disk game costs up to 90 dollars. Yes 90 dollars for a game! It's an incredible amount, so pirating is the only way, either that or have no games. I have often inquired about direct mail orders from overseas, but they can take from 3 to 6 weeks! (can you suggest anybody quicker, say within two week delivery by air).

I am in a wheelchair, so the computer plays a big part in my life. I'm at it all the time, programming and hacking (and playing of course!)

Well, I'd better stop now, or else it will cost too much in stamps! Before I go, do you think you could run an overseas competition, and say give six months to enter. That would be excellent. We have to rely on overseas magazines like yours for news and stuff as there are none made in New Zealand, so keep up the good work, we need it. Thanks.

Richard Goulstone, Auckland, New Zealand

Oh dear. What a confession you've made Richard. I'm afraid I can't agree with you that pirating games is okay even when the price of software is incredibly high. Stealing is stealing, and if software prices in New Zealand are so high it just could be because so many of you New Zealanders copy games that shops know they are only going to sell a few copies of a game. Things won't get any better as a result of organised piracy and the day may come when software houses refuse to allow their products to be sold in your beautiful country.

Why not drop Auntie Aggie at AMTIX! Mail Order an Aerogramme? (She lives at PO BOX 10 in Ludlow and is regularly wrapping up little parcels of games to send to readers in far-flung places where the price of software is so high it brings tears to the eyes.)

As for special overseas competitions, the Powers That Be say they just wouldn't work, but I'll go and see them with my brollie and see if I can get something sorted out for you and all our other overseas readers . . .

Oh, and Happy May. Or should that be June!

ST



WIGGLY II

Dear Saffron
In your last excellent OTS you had a letter about the 'Problem with Wiggly Things'. I too have had this experience. For Christmas I received a *Quickshot II Turbo* and it broke two days later. So, I took it back to the shop and got another – and guess what? It broke! I've got my money back now but I still have doubts about the *Quickshot* family. Could you tell me what your five favourite joysticks are as you did say that you were the leading expert of Wiggly Things!

Philip Hobson, Beverley, North Humberside.

Now then Philip, let me think. Climbing up at number five it's Konix with their peculiar one hand wonder the *Speedking*. A non mover at four for Euromax and their *Competition Pro* (£16.95) but hurtling up into the number three slot it's the *Arcade Turbo* (£22.95) another riser for Euromax. Retaining the number two slot is Euromax once again with their *Micro Pro* (£16.95) but this week's number one is the totally amazing Euromax with *Professional Plus* at the amazing price of (£19.95). And that's your lot stick-pickers.

ST

OF GARDEN GNOMES AND FISH PONDS

Dear Beloved,
I'm warning you. I have a copy of AA to hand and if you don't print this I will be forced to read it, thus committing horrible hara-kiri.
LM. It's . . . er . . . er . . . different.

Let's have a metallic flash. No, I didn't want you to indecently expose Terminal Man (bring 'im back please!). I meant let's have the metallic effect back on the logo.
Keep up the good work. Lots 'n' lots of reviews 'n' previews and adverts 'n' features.

Rob Moore, Dalton-in-Furness, Cumbria

PS You remind me of a garden gnome overlooking the fish pool of existence.

No! No! Don't do it! Look, I've printed the letter. Now don't do anything silly. I haven't had that much response to LM. I'd like to hear views on our Chrissy present to you all.

The metallic flash is an interesting idea, and one that I'll put to Oliver. Incidentally, you may have noticed that we've included a new Amstrad strap on the cover so people know what the magazine's about when they see it on the shelf. Just thought I'd point that out to stop people enquiring why! As for the gnome-like existence, I sometimes feel like that but I think, on the whole, OTS is so interactive that I'm in the pond myself. And what's more it's wet!

ST

A FIERY OUTBURST

Dear Saffy,
I've a few points on **Durell**'s latest game, *Thanatos*. They've got it wrong: according to legend, dragons have four legs. *Thanatos* has two, and should be therefore classed as a Wyvern.
Also, Wyverns don't breathe fire, so perhaps **Durell** should have called him a 'Dragen' or a 'Wygan'. And how on earth did they get eight colours in mode 1?
As for the Terminal Man being scrapped, I think you ought to do another strip based on AMTIX! itself. Rich is a right bossy-boots, Saffron beats everyone up with the brolly, Malc's the invalid, and so on. I'm sure you could persuade Oli.

Robert Lane, Mansfield, Notts

Clever of you to spot that, Rob old fruit. However, I don't think *Thanatos the Wygan* would have seemed right. Sounds like a northern town to me. Getting eight colours into mode one isn't as difficult as it may appear. The technique is known as 'splitting the screen' so that it effectively becomes two screens displaying graphics independently. Clever stuff!

There's been a lot of talk about Terminal Man II but I don't think Oliver will include the joystick junkies – but your descriptions seem to fit the bill. Oops. Malcolm's seen the invalid comment and is in a foul temper again.

ST

DISKED OFF

Dear Saffron
Soon after hearing the price of 3 inch disks was to drop to £2.95 I went to WH Smiths and discovered they were selling them at £4.95, the original price, as were all the other shops in Plymouth. What price should they be selling them for?
Having had a comparitive review of the best joysticks and the cheapest printers how about one about modems and software to drive them?
I am still a CRASH subscriber and, although not yet an AMTIX! subscriber, I would like to know if I order software from you do I qualify for the subscriber discount? If not can I order Amstrad software from CRASH?

Jonathan Shaw, Liskeard,

From the top . . .
There were rumours that all Amstrad disks were dropping in price – but it hasn't happened universally yet. However, at the recent Amstrad show there were a few discount offers available.

I'll pass your comparitive review idea on to to Tony who knows about Modems – so he tells me. Jon, feel free to order as much Amstrad software via CRASH as you wish. However, after you take a look at the great freebie-a-gogo give away Subscription offer this issue you may be able to get a game free if you subscribe!

ST

ANSWERS ON A POST CARD . . .

Dear Doctor Saffron,

I need a prescription. No tablets, but solutions to the excellent comps run by AMTIX! I look at the Spot the Difference comp – and I'm hooked! I study the picture looking for as many differences as possible. I find a lot of large differences and lots of small ones – but which are correct? Please at least tell us the number of differences along with the winners.

I see a wordsquare – I'm hooked again! I spend hours looking, studying and driving everyone potty when I can't find a word. PLease give the solution!

I see a load of questions and answer them to the best of my ability but if I'm right no-one tells me. Please tell us. Please, please, please give the solutions! Keep up the comps and all the work for the BEST Amstrad magazine around!

Ernest Nelson, Belfast, Northern Ireland

I think you've made your point. You want solutions right? I'll have a word with the Crumbly one and if he deems it fit we'll start next issue. Wait and see what the all powerful one says.

ST

RANTING RATINGS

Dear Saffron

I am mystified about something. I occasionally read AA (sorry, but don't worry, AMTIX! will always be my fave) and I saw how your reviewers (Messrs Eddy, Valducci, Clarke) differ. You rated *Xeno* 96% and really loved it. Yet AA only rated it 78%. Same for *Bobby Bearing*. You also gave this (as well as *Xeno*) an Accolade, with a rating of 93%, but AA gave it a meagre 79%. Can you explain? Also your mag has to be the most funny, informative and best Amstrad mag. Keep it up!!

On a serious note - Piracy is a bloody stupid thing to do. I was in a very well known computer store called Adam's World. They said to me when I asked why games were so highly priced, Well, over about 4 years, the price of software has risen from an average price of £6.95 to £9.95. Don't people realise how stupid copying games is? Also, why did the spikey-haired Julian Rignall leave AMTIX! doing the Amtips and go to ZZAP! 64 and leave Tony to do it? Anyway gotta go now, so 'Bye!

Matt Levy, Brecon, London

To answer your points in order: they're probably a miserable bunch of sourpusses; people don't seem to realise that copying games is not only stupid – it's stealing; because he was recalled to duty on the C64 front and Techno Tony wanted to expand his empire.

There. Do you like my new brisk efficiency?

ST

SPACED OUT

Dear Saffron

I've just been suckered into buying *Space Harrier* and *Gauntlet* disks for my new 6128 and to my horror I find a major fault with *Gauntlet* and a major let down with *Space Harrier*.

Within the intellectual bounds of my vast knowledge, and having checked with other users, there appears to be a fault on all Amstrad disks for *Gauntlet* by **US Gold**. As you know, after level seven all the screens are random, but some of the screens have a sort of defect which causes them to break down or simply not load. I know this isn't the fault of my computer and I know it just wasn't one faulty disk because I've replaced it several times and the shop is getting fed up with this.

As for *Space Harrier*, what happened to the giant robots and the fearsome two headed dragon? What's the point of paying £14.95 for a disk game just to discover that you can complete the game and knock up a score of 5,234,272 and not even meet a baby robot with a pop-gun?

C I Tunbridge, Lanarkshire, Scotland

As you can see from the *Space Harrier* review this issue no-one thought it was particularly brilliant – especially Richard, have you seen the size of his comment? For *Gauntlet* give Richard (I'm in twice this issue) Tidsall a ring at US Gold and moan to him. He's a very understanding sort of chap.

ST

A SERIOUS BIT

Dear Saffron

Let's be serious. First I have a confession to make – I used to be a Spectrum owner and had quite a collection of games until I saw games from the Amstrad and Commodore. After some thought I decided to part with the readies and get an Amstrad.

After owning it for a few months I have already found some problems. Many of the Computer stockists in Wolverhampton sell few, if any, Amstrad games and those who do sell only old games. In future I shall take advantage of your mail order service.

This isn't the biggest problem I have. Ever since I first purchased a computer game I've noticed that lots of games show screen shots on the packs from arcade versions, or even those of other computer formats. It's even worse when they aren't any screen shots at all! This makes choosing games a real pain so could you give the relevant minions a kick up the . . .

Finally, I want to learn basic on the 464 – can you recommend a book?

Robert Margan, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton

Working back up your meanderings . . . If you want to learn a bit of Basic try Logic 3's *Learn Basic*. it costs around £20 and is obtainable from Ash and Newman Ltd, 165 Garth Road, Mordern, Surrey.

I agree with you – pack shots should have the right computer version on them. I don't know why they don't. Maybe some Software House would like to contact me? Finally, I used to own a Spectrum too!

ST

TIME TO GO ONCE MORE

I'm not looking forward to this – walking home in the snow. I'll get my monkey boots all soggy and they take ages to dry out! No matter, it'll be Spring soon and all the flowers will be out and there will be a lovely fragrance in the air. Sorry, I must stop all this girlie nonsense.

I want your letters! Write to me! Drop what ever you're doing and write! Power of the pen and all that! You should know where I am but for first time readers it's . . . SAFFY TREVASKIS, AMTIX!, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire. SY8 1DB.

Until next month then . . .



GO GO GADGET

Yet another popular television programme could soon be appearing on an Amstrad near you! This time it is the turn of Inspector Gadget, a famous French cartoon character. His computer game is being released by **Melbourne House**.

As usual, the route is paved with dangers galore. There are fragile glass panes, holes, small lakes, boulders, snakes, and bouncing balls. Luckily for our hero he has his usual dose of obscure and whacky aids, including the Gadget copter, Gadget elastic legs, and Gadget skates.

Inspector Gadget and the Circus of Fear is supposed to be an addictive and hilarious game, with excellent graphics, large sprites, fantastic music, and lots of action. We'll let you know as soon as possible!

ADRIAN MOLE GOES TO VIRGIN

Anyone who has been watching the new Adrian Mole series on television will be interested to know that **Virgin Games** will be publishing the latest **Mosaic** product, *The Growing Pains of Adrian Mole*.

The new game, which follows hot on the heels of the *Diary of Adrian Mole*, is programmed by **Level 9**, and follows events in another year of Adrian's life.

IT'S THAT GRANGE HILL MOB


GRANGE HILL BBC tv
Bradley Sheppard as Hollo


GRANGE HILL BBC tv
John Holmes as Gonch

They are bringing out *Grange Hill* as an adventure game, coming soon to your local computer shop. The program's scenario is based on one of the actual episodes which was called 'After Hours', and involves two of the TV programme's popular characters – Hollo and Gonch.

The two mischievous lads try to break into the school to retrieve a personal stereo which has been confiscated by one of their teachers. There are the obligatory puzzles and twists in the storyline, which was devised by Colin Jones.

INTO THE FIFTH QUADRANT

A new space adventure game is heading earthwards, courtesy of **Bubble Bus**. Entitled *The Fifth Quadrant*, it chronicles the journeys of the Galactic Survey Vessel, ORION, which is engaged on a mission to map and explore the galaxies of the Hercules Cluster. After twenty years the survey is almost complete, with everything mapped apart from one strange-looking nebula. The crew prepare to cross the inter-galactic space by putting themselves into sustained low energy expenditure process.

As they are crossing space, Orion is taken over by a force of strange alien mechanical beings – the dreaded Zimen. When the crew re-emerge they find many of the ship's systems have been terminated. To make matters worse, all of the computers are re-programmed in an alien language and there are Zimen everywhere. The crew have to overcome the obstacles and regain control of their survey vessel.

JULIAN GOES DOWN FIGHTING

It only seems like a matter of days since the final of **Domark**'s *Trivial Pursuit* challenge but in fact at the time of writing it is almost history.

AMTIX! representative, Julian Hearn, put up a good show but failed to win through the initial round at the finals, which were held at The Brewery Conference Centre in London.

Our very own Crumbly Editor, Malcolm Harding, attended the final and found himself acting as quiz-master on one of the three tables. He is pictured with Julian watching the six finalists battling for the £10,000 solid gold version of the popular board game.

For the record, the event was won by John Cook, a lecturer from Portsmouth. It has to be said that most of the finalists were very mature computer enthusiasts, unlike our own teenage representative!



NEWS

INFOGRAMES AND ERE UNITE

Infogrames has announced a United Kingdom distribution deal with **ERE Informatique**, a fellow French software house, which produced *Get Dexter*, *Doomsday Blues* and *Pacific* last year. The agreement takes immediate effect.



ULTIMATE ACCOLADE FOR CHEETAH PRODUCTS

Yet another Welsh based company has been winning accolades for their computer peripherals. **Cheetah Marketing** of Cardiff have won a coveted 'Peripheral of the Year' award for their *Spec-drum* and *Amdrum* digital drum machines.

PRESTIGIOUS AWARD FOR KONIX

A Welsh company, which produces joysticks, has won the New Enterprise Award in the Welsh National Business Awards of 1986.

Konix Computer Products are based at Tredegar in Gwent and make the *Speed King* joystick. The company reached three finals, the Design Technology Award, the New Enterprise Award, and the Business Achievement of the Year Award.

The picture shows Wyn Holloway, left, managing director of Konix, receiving the award from the chairman of ICI, Sir John Harvey-Jones.

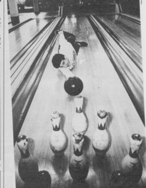


MONTY'S EUROPEAN TOUR

It appears that a new Monty game is in the pipeline, and the little rodent is busy doing research for it. AMTIX! Towers have received several postcards from him, the two latest being posted in Monchengladbach, Germany, and Madrid in Spain. The name and content of the game have not been unveiled yet, but as soon as we receive further news we'll let you know.



STRIKING OUT WITH 10TH FRAME



The latest sports simulation from **US Gold** is *10th Frame*, a ten pin bowling game which, due to its attention to detail, is claimed to have all of the professionalism of the real thing!

The alley is viewed in perspective, from behind the bowler's back. You can select league play and take the option of playing in teams of up to four people, or open bowling which will allow up to eight people to take part.

You can also select the level of play, from amateur to professional, and there is even a kid's level.

The picture shows Richard Tidsall being bowled over by the game!

FROM ART GALLERY TO OCEAN DESIGNER

It's pure coincidence, of course, but Mark Jones of Poole, whose work figured in our first *Rainbird Art Gallery*, has landed himself a job as a graphics designer for Manchester based **Ocean** software.

Well done Mark! Come on readers, let's have some more entries from you for the gallery. You never know, you might be the next one to be snapped up by a software company!


IMPOSSABALL
Spectrum Cassette £8.95
Amstrad Cassette £8.95
Amstrad Disk £14.95
Do you have the nerve and skill to guide your bouncing Impossaball through the Corridor of Doom? Time is running out.
Bounce onto a spike and Impossaball is obliterated, touch a column and Impossaball will rebound at electric speeds. Against this constantly moving background of death dealing obstacles you must squash all the cylinders to complete the game.
Are you good enough?
For Mail Order send a cheque/P.O. to Hewson Consultants Ltd. Order by Credit Card sending your Access/Barclaycard number, and a specimen signature. Don't forget to enclose your name and address.
As part of our continuing development of innovative software we are always happy to evaluate software sent to us with a view to publication.
HEWSON
56b Milton Trading Estate, Milton, Abingdon, Oxon. OX14 4RX

LITTLE COMPUTER PEOPLE

Activision, £14.99 disk only, keys

THE GREAT DISCOVERY

The Activision *Little Computer People* (LCP) Research Group has been operating now for some time – ever since the first LCP was discovered inside a Commodore 64. After many months of development and research, David Crane and Sam Nelson managed to coax one of these reclusive creatures into an artificial habitat and studied its movements. LCP talk a strange language which is incomprehensible to the un-trained ear, but with Crane's expertise he began regular conversations with them. A year passed, then finally he found some startling information – there was another colony of LCP to be found inside Amstrads!

Activision have produced a disk program which creates an artificial environment for the little computer people. Each disk houses its own unique LCP – with his own name and peculiar habits. Most of them even have different tastes in clothes.

Their screen home takes the shape of a large house, equipped with all the latest conveniences. It shouldn't be too long before one decides to take up residence (with a little coaxing, of course). However, when one has moved in the others won't follow – they are selfish creatures and want their own separate homes.

So, how do they live? **Richard Eddy** now reports on his findings after having spent a week with his pet person.





FIVE DAYS IN THE LIFE OF A LITTLE COMPUTER PERSON

Tuesday 6th January 1987: with the house already on screen, I eagerly awaited the new arrival. A minute passed and I became curious as to whether I actually had an LCP in my Amstrad. Desperation set in when another minute passed and there was still no sign of the cute one. I was prepared to turn off (and go away and cry), when the door was suddenly opened and in stepped a rather cautious LCP. Looking rather pleased with himself for his discovery of this luxury pad, he began to inspect the premises. My LCP examined his lounge carefully, tested the armchair, and found it to his liking. Things were looking good! After a thorough examination of the kitchen and the accompanying furniture, he began to explore the other floors of the building. He pulled open drawers, went into the cupboards and switched the telly on and off again. Finally he returned downstairs to the lounge – Great!

He looked at me, giving me a really hard stare, that made me feel somewhat uncomfortable – Now what? He walked to the door and left. No! Come back, I love you, I think we could get on really well. Please. (Sob, sob). The whole place dropped into silence as I waited anxiously for my new found friend to return – would he?

As luck would have it, one minute later he returned with his dog in tow. Great – my LCP was going to stay, and what's more he had a pet. Straight away I knew this dog was going to cause trouble – it headed directly for the food bowl. After feeding the dog, my LCP decided to settle down to make a fire and read the paper. Fine, if he doesn't want to tell me how grateful he is then that's okay. Humph, see if I care.

Following the suggestion that maybe (if he could find the time) he would like to type me a letter, my LCP stared at me in such a way that I began to feel insecure. However, the sweetie nodded cheerfully and began his trek upstairs to the top floor where he keeps his typewriter . . .

Dear Ricky,

Living here I am as happy as I could be. I've got lots of water to drink . . . Maybe I should ask someone to move in, or at least get a cat.

Your friend, Otis.

My LCP has a name, he's OTIS – fab! 'Hello Otis', I said. As a house-warming present I sent him up a record which he gladly accepted. He gave me a big grin and put it with his collection. 'How about playing the piano?' I enquired. With a cheerful nod he sat himself in front of the piano and struck up the first chord. This was where I realised my mistake – he can't play the piano very well. I tried urging him to stop but he just got totally carried away playing the most appalling renditions of Mozart and Bach. At least he's got good breeding. Not being able to stand any more of Otis' creative talents I bade him goodnight and switched off, eagerly awaiting tomorrow's revelations.

Wednesday 7th January 1987: something told me that Otis didn't appreciate my turning him off last night. As I joined him he was in a decidedly grumpy mood, not only did he not speak to me – he didn't even greet me with his cute little smile! I also got the feeling that he didn't like me very much; he continued to issue the question 'Would you like to change the researcher?' Suddenly I had an idea as to how I could cheer him up – make him receive a telephone call! Unfortunately this didn't seem to work at all – he had obviously received some bad news . . .

Dear friend,

Remember I have several hobbies which occupy a great deal of my time. That crazy canine is acting like a puppy, but he's a great companion. I'm very happy when you ruffle my hair, it makes me thankful for living here.

Yours, Otis.

Gosh! That was a bit unexpected – obviously he'd cheered up a bit. Oh no! He started a mad dash around the house doing all sorts of things; and every time he wanted some attention he knocked on the screen. Firstly, Otis dashed off to the computer and played with his *Space Invaders*, then he made a telephone call. Suddenly he was off again . . . Now what?

Exercise time. Leaping and springing all over the bedroom carpet. Fed up with exercising, the cute one proceeded back to his computer for some programming and once more asked if I would like to change the researcher. 'NO! Get this Otis, I am your owner – you are my pet. Got that? Good'. Couldn't he just settle down for a while? Obviously not, he wanted some more attention – with a game of anagrams this time. After getting the box of games from his cabinet, Otis skipped merrily downstairs, juggling the box from hand to hand, and finally setting up the game on the kitchen table. Guess what? Half the house disappeared, only to be replaced by an overview of the kitchen table. Up came a load of jumbled letters, SCDENA – ah, I can see that's ascend. Obviously a bit annoyed that I won first go, he packed up and trotted off to read his paper.

Otis appeared to be well and truly settled in by now. He wasn't at all nervous, and even told me that it may get to the stage where he couldn't see me for a couple of days because 'he had a lot of things which were a demand on his time'. What things? Like that damned computer? I was getting used to sharing my desk with the pixel person – he was great company.

Thursday 8th January 1987: this was 'setting up' day for the Amstrad Show at the Novotel in London. I couldn't face four days without seeing Otis, so I dragged my CPC464 into my hotel room and hoped Otis wouldn't object to a bit of luxury – or that the manager wouldn't have any qualms about me bringing a pet person with me (even if he was only an inch and a half high). Otis began the day in the right way – with a wash and brush up. Of the three days that I'd owned him, it was the first time that he'd cleaned his teeth – maybe I should suggest a shower? He then, quite happily, made his way upstairs and typed a letter of his own free will.

Dear Ricky,

Living here my belly is always full and I don't have to worry where my next meal is coming from. I'm very happy and love it when you ruffle my hair. Next week I plan to learn some new songs to play on the piano. I'll give it some thought and let you know.

Love Otis.

This didn't sound too good. Not more of his damned piano playing. Luckily he hadn't touched the keys for a few days – he appeared to be quite content with his computer. I wondered maybe if Otis had his own pet person?

Friday 9th January 1987 I didn't get around to seeing Otis until about seven on Friday evening, and just as I had switched him on I was dragged out for a meal. It was some time later that I returned to find Otis sitting in his chair looking downright miserable. Oh dear, calamity, what had I done? I'd neglected my responsibilities and now I was paying the price. Sob. After trying to ruffle his hair, which only resulted in his sulking at his computer, I got him to type me a letter. Which, surprisingly seemed quite cheerful. Well, Otis had been up quite late so it's goodnight. Say goodnight Otis.

"Mejfjslgfnlksddsjck . . . "

Saturday 10th January 1987: today is the last day of my trial period with Otis. Unless we patch things up after last night's performance, we're going to have to have a trial separation. I'm feeling terribly guilty, so all the crawly tactics I can think of to keep us together come into play. I dump loads of records at his front door (which he files away tidily), and then present him with books and a few telephone calls. He appears to be getting happy again – HOORAY!

I ruffle his hair a bit more and fill up his water tank. Finally he begins to smile again – it seems that all our worries are over and we're back together again. It must be love!

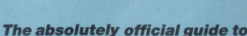
■ **LCP is a 'game' that at first seems quite simplistic in nature, primarily on account of the bland graphics. Strangely enough though, the fun starts to increase with time. The whole point is to discover what the pet person can do. The main character moves surprisingly smoothly for a mode 0 screen, with different sound effects for the footsteps as it moves across lino, tiling or carpet. LCP should have a wide appeal, but be advised to see it before buying if you are unfamiliar with the program.**

Anthony

■ **Some people may be put off LCP for the simple fact that it cannot be classed as a game – well don't be, for there is a lot more to it than meets the eye. The different pet people vary in character to some extent, and although the artificial intelligence is programmed in such a way so as to give the pet person some independence, the fun really starts when it comes to looking after it. Responsibility is the name of the game – if you mistreat your pet person he will become ill, stubborn and a downright pain. It is this that makes LCP the engrossing and unpredictably fun (un)game that it is.**

Mass

LITTLE COMPUTER PEOPLE



The absolutely official guide to an LCP abode

TV and Armchair: Otis only watches war films (some morbid fascination I suppose) – Dakka dakkka Boom!

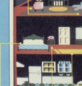
Record player: give an LCP a record and he'll be your friend for life – he may also start to body-pop!

Piano: Otis doesn't play this very well, but you may find that some LCPs are born maestros!

Bathroom: cleanliness is next to Godliness – unfortunately Otis only has a bath once a year.

***Typewriter**: the only real communication that an LCP is going to have with you is achieved via the keyboard. As he begins to like you he'll end his letters with 'Love from..'*

Green cabinet: Otis quite often rifles through the bottom drawer which seemed to house all sorts of oddments; paper, board games, cards . . .



The computer room: the use of this room varies from LCP to LCP. Otis loves it – but he doesn't play many games.

Fireplace: important – LCPs don't like the cold, but you'll probably have to suggest that they make a fire themselves.

***The door**: this is the access point to the rest of LCP's world. Unfortunately, this world is a complete mystery as we never see beyond the door.*

***Armchair**: paper reading, snoozing and general relaxation all take place here. When you want to ruffle your LCP's hair a hand used for this purpose comes from the wall nearest the armchair.*

Alarm clock: a great way to make Otis ratty – wait until he's sitting in the chair then make it ring.

Bed: when Otis was feeling blue (or rather green), he spent most of the time feeling sorry for himself here – poor little lamb.

Water tank: always keep this topped up. We don't want any dehydrated LCPs around the place do we?

Kitchen table: obviously for eating off. Also the place where LCPs play their games – Fun.

***Bedroom mat**: used for early morning exercises, if he's feeling energetic.*

Telephone: you'll probably never understand a full LCP conversation, but it keeps them happy.

The kitchen: Otis' main preoccupation here is making food for both the dog and himself. Clean and tidy – he'd make a lovely wife!

Little Computer People are a unique form of pet. Like all pets, they can have a limited appeal. This isn't a game – it's more like a way of life. The Little Computer People Discovery Kit is a unique form of computer entertainment, and as such it doesn't comply with our ratings system – hence the absence of ratings. However LCP deserves credit – we have therefore decided to award it an Accolade.

■ I've always been fascinated by artificial intelligence, and I know that this isn't the real thing – but it doesn't half seem like it. Otis is a great little character. I was quite happy to leave him sitting on my desk for days just playing with him from time to time. Even if there are some people who get fed up with LCP's antics there are always anagrams, card war and poker to play with them – which, surprisingly, are quite addictive. LCP is more than a game – it's a way of life and deserves no lesser title.

Richard

AMTIX! Accolade


THE THINKING MANS SHOOT 'EM UP!
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INFODROID

Beyond, £9.95 cass, joystick or keys

As the centuries rolled on man expanded far into space. A planet was eventually designated the administrative capital of the universe, and its surface was covered by a huge city. Communications between the interstellar organisations based on this planet was essential for operational efficiency. Although correspondence was achieved mainly via high-tech electronic systems, there was still a great need for small packages to be delivered from office to office. Messenger robots were built to collect and deliver conventional mail – these were Infodroids.

Mass — CRITICISM

INFODROID is one of the few games that I found extremely difficult to work my way around without the help of a map. The icon system is confusing at first, but can soon be flicked through without any bother. Travelling the causeways poses no problems once the movement pattern of other droids is recognised. After all is said INFODROID, although a novel concept, could prove very tedious as there is little variation – all the causeways are virtually the same. The graphics are, on the whole, smooth and well-defined, marred only by the jerky spinning cube. If you have the incentive to make more money then this game is worth your while; otherwise it becomes like the graphics and sound effects - extremely repetitive.

Richard — CRITICISM

INFODROID is fairly unique and original – I'll give it that. However, for all the colourful graphics and the novel concept it didn't really grab my attention. The tasks began to get quite repetitive – pick up a parcel, travel the causeways, reach the destination, and then do it all over again. Not so much a yawn, but not enthralling either. The droid under your control appears quite bland in comparison with the opposition who all have bright colours so they are easily recognisable – it didn't stand out enough for my liking. These little things annoyed me.

Having been granted an Infodroid operator's licence, your aim is to make money by visiting companies, collecting parcels and delivering them. Sixteen organisations are based on the administrative planet, and each corporation has at least three depots – accessed by a system of fifteen major causeways inter-connected by junction rooms. The stationary causeways are flanked by six moving platforms, three on each side. The pair of moving platforms closest to the central causeway move slowly, with the middle pair travelling a little faster and the outer lanes pelting along. The causeway and its mobile neighbours are displayed on the vertically scrolling screen, with the left-hand travelators moving upwards and the right-hand roadways moving downwards. The droid under your control can hop sideways from roadway to roadway and can bounce along the causeway it occupies – care must be taken not to go 'off' the screen or bump into another robotic traveller as your droid suffers collision damage.

Lifts are dotted around the central causeways and lead to underground company offices where goods have to be collected or delivered. Installations and offices are identified by initials or logos. Information rooms are indicated by an 'I'. Junction rooms (which allow the droid to join another main causeway) are marked by an arrow pointing downwards, and garages where repairs and new pieces of equipment may be obtained bear the sign of the spanner. To enter an underground chamber, leap onto a circular lift then hold fire and down together.

The infodroid interface is the icon-driven control screen. You start life as a budding infodroid entrepreneur with 8,000 credits in the bank, and a droid with some basic add-ons and fully charged energy cells (monitored by a bar read-out at the bottom of the screen). The infodroid is equipped with forward thrusters, and an Automatic Platform Alignment System which keeps the droid on a causeway in conjunction with the Automatic Platform Centering Device. Without these two platform-holding devices, the droid uses energy to stay on the road. A Gyro Rotator allows the droid to be turned to the required direction of travel; a shield protects it from collisions, and finally a Navigation Unit displays the current position.

Icons in the bottom centre of the screen reveal the status of these devices. Starting from green (fully operational), successive collisions cause individual icons to change to yellow, orange, red, dark red and finally grey – useless. A grey icon either indicates that a part has not been fitted or that it has been totally destroyed.

A three by three grid at the top left of the screen contains eight icons grouped around the central square. Accessing an icon causes information to be displayed on the right of the screen, and a range of actions are including collecting mail, dropping objects, repairing the droid, buying components and moving to the causeway. The grid represents one face of a cube, and further sets of icons may be called onto screen by rotating the cube.

The infodroid interface screen appears when you descend from the causeway and enter a junction room but two main icons are found: one takes you to another causeway and the other takes the droid back the causeway just left. There is more than one route to a



Anthony — CRITICISM

For me this game was tedious from the word go. The movement of the main character is quite jerky, though the scrolling at high speed is fairly smooth. The game idea is a little unoriginal: just collecting things and delivering them to other places for a profit. Although the inlay promises four pieces of music the game contains nothing but average sound effects – this omission could be a reason to take the game back to the shop, which is what I would try if I had bought it.

particular destination, so mapping the exits from junction rooms is part of successful droid operation.

Parcels are collected from company despatch rooms – the interface screen appears when the droid enters a despatch room and the full name of the company is displayed. The Collection and Delivery points are called onto screen by spinning the droid to the left or right. When a parcel is picked up the value of the delivery job is given together with its destination. Once the destination is reached, delivering the parcel earns the agreed number of credits which are added to your account automatically.

Pirate droids on the causeways attempt to damage your droid and steal the packages you are carrying – they must be avoided at all costs. Damage sustained on the road can be repaired by entering a garage. Here, individual components can be repaired, new or used parts may be bought and sold, and fuel can be purchased. There are ten garages in the city, and prices for the services rendered vary – shop around!

PRESENTATION 78%
The game is well explained.

GRAPHICS 66%
Smooth and nicely defined, but every causeway looks the same.

SOUND 45%
No tune and the sound effects tend to be more annoying than impressive.

PLAYABILITY 78%
Far from easy to get into, but it soon becomes routine once the controls have been mastered.

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 61%
Initially great fun to explore but the novelty soon wears off.

VALUE FOR MONEY 56%
Originality aside, the game lacks in variation and doesn't really merit its price tag.

OVERALL 68%
A unique game but, unfortunately, it becomes monotonous.

HIJACK

Electric Dreams, £9.99 cass, joystick or keys

In the age of the terrorist, hijacking is a regular occurrence – no-one is safe. Now an unknown group of terrorists have hijacked a bus load of kids and are holding them hostage. As head of the hijack division, it is your job to track them down – using all the military, financial and political power available to you. Time is running short . . .

The game is set in the Hijack Department of the Pentagon, which is filled with the usual bunch of go-fers – with the President right at the top of the political ladder. He may be able to help, but if you fail he can give you the sack!

The department is split into several offices inter-linked by a lift in which you can travel up and down – when one is available. The faces of your fellow employees are displayed along the top of the screen and light up whenever they are in the same room as you. As a head of department it is possible to command them to carry out orders – they can prove to be helpful (or a hindrance) depending on how they are handled.

Mass — CRITICISM

HIJACK does not rely on the graphics for it's playability – good thing too, as they are a bit of an eyesore, and become rather indistinguishable in places. The gameplay is intricate and would appeal more to people with a good memory, as a lot of clues and information needs to be taken in and retained. A complex but fun detective type game for all you budding Sherlock Holmes'.

Useful information can be extracted from the FBI Agent, a master of interrogation. Intelligence work is carried out by the CIA Agent, who provides reports on the activities of the hijackers. There are also many political, military and financial assistants. They have the power to call up the diplomats to negotiate, or to summon troops to beat the hijackers into a surrender.

Clues may be picked up using the icon control system which allows you to access menus – information, such as newspaper headlines or top secret documents can also be called up.

When you eventually feel confident enough to confront the hijackers, you must contact the President – he possesses a code which allows you to fly off in his helicopter.

If the mission fails and time runs out, your future as a White house staff member may be in doubt. You might even find yourself with the new job of Head of the American Embassy in Outer Mongolia – aaargh!

Richard — CRITICISM

HIJACK looks awful, it could have been dumped straight from a Spectrum – in fact, it probably was! However, despite this the gameplay is quite enjoyable and very involved. The interaction between characters is well implemented, and with a bit of careful planning the solution shouldn't be too difficult to achieve. If you like games that don't rely too heavily on graphics, then take a look it this – it can be fun. Just don't expect to be absolutely engrossed, as it's just not one of those games.



PRESENTATION 58%
Somewhat confusing instructions – but generally good.

GRAPHICS 47%
Very basic, with no masking routine – but they serve their purpose.

SOUND 40%
Not a great deal, except for some useful squeaks.

PLAYABILITY 60%
It may take some time to get used to . . .

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 61%
. . . but the further you get the more fascinating it becomes.

VALUE FOR MONEY 52%
A bit over priced for a game that will have minority appeal.

OVERALL 58%
Will only appeal to the out and out strategy adventurer.

MARBLE MADNESS

CONSTRUCTION SET

Melbourne House, £9.95 cass, joystick or keys

Following the recent spate of *Marble Madness* clones, the original has at last arrived. **Melbourne House** have released the official version, complete with the inclusion of a construction set. The package is split into two parts; firstly the game . . .

over the flat planes isn't so bad, but the narrow ramps and bridges can prove extremely hazardous – one small roll out of place, and poor old Mr Spherical plunges to his death in the murky swamp lands surrounding the track. Many creatures inhabit the swamp lands, some of which occasionally force themselves up on to the race track – in search of any slow-witted contestants who may fall prey to the difficult corners. The most notorious of the odious creatures are the evil marbles. These loathsome fellows roll carelessly along the plains, and often bring along sproingy creatures who move in a slinky fashion on the surface of the slopes. Contact with these, and any other of the many swamp creatures, leads to obliteration as well as a loss of time.

Life as a marble can't be an easy one; especially when you're trapped in a strange world of unreality where the normal laws of physics no longer apply. So, to pass the time, the Spherical One enters the local races. The objective of these is to reach the end of the track before the time runs out.

With four directions at your disposal, keep the marble under control as he wends his weary way to the end of the race track. Racing

If you become fed up with the preset patterns of the racetrack, there is an option on the title screen which allows you to construct your own course. The construction process is controlled by the four standard direction keys plus a fire key. Running down the right hand side of the construction screen is a selection of the various planes that can be used to make up a revised track. They include two angular planes, one flat, one vertical, a left and right slant, and two steep inclines. Along the bottom of the screen is a text option window. Using this you can place oddments on the screen such as time displays, points scored, and marks of 100, 300 and 500. Options are accessed by moving the arrow cursor onto the slab required and pressing fire. Doing this allows movement of the chosen item around the screen, until a suitable place is found to deposit it. After successfully completing the on-screen construction, selecting Test causes a marble to appear at the top – now it's time to see if your Great Design has worked. If not, it's back to the old drawing board.

Richard — CRITICISM

At last you can create your own arcade game, courtesy of Melbourne House. It's a really neat package with everything needed to make your own marble race track. Unfortunately, the movements of the marble are a bit sluggish – but if you can put up with that, it can prove very enjoyable. The graphics are generally well designed, but the colour is a bit limited. The construction set is very simple to use and includes enough slabs and nasties to make many an interesting track. The way the icon selection system has been implemented makes construction simple, and it's actually quite difficult to go wrong. I'd advise anyone with the remotest interest in MARBLE MADNESS type games to look at this – for the construction set if nothing else.

Anthony — CRITICISM

MARBLE MADNESS has never captured my imagination, but at least now I can only complain about my own designs. The ball control is very sluggish when a large marble is used, but selecting a small one will have you whipping around the screen at a fair rate of knots. The construction section is well presented, but it is quite hard to set up a screen correctly – although with practice some devious mazes can be built.

Mass — CRITICISM

I've never played MARBLE MADNESS in the arcades but I think I'm quite tempted to try it out after this. I enjoyed creating my own screens – the system is very flexible to use. It's just a pity that more wasn't made out of the use of colour, it's just struck me as a bit dull. Unfortunately, when completing one track there's a few seconds wait until the next one comes up which detracts from the action a bit.

PRESENTATION 80%
Very simple to get to grips with due to the informative documentation.

GRAPHICS 71%
Uncluttered but a bit weak on the colour side.

SOUND 58%
Nice spot effects, shame about the tune.

PLAYABILITY 68%
Generally good – if a bit sluggish.

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 80%
The construction set provides a great lasting interest.

VALUE FOR MONEY 72%
Fair enough, considering the two sections.

OVERALL 74%
A very enjoyable product that's slightly let down by the sluggish action.

YIE AR KUNG FU II

Imagine, £8.95 cass, joystick or keys

As the name suggests *Yie Ar Kung Fu II* is another Ninja bash'em up in which the hero, Lee Young, must face eight differing computer opponents or pit his fighting ability against a second player who has the choice of controlling one of the first three warriors.

Before the first warrior is reached, and in between warriors, there are three screens of midget fighters to contend with. These are approximately a third of the size of Lee, appearing from the left or right of the screen, moving along the ground, at chest height or at head height. To defend himself Lee has a combination of ten moves; jump, duck, move left and right, low and high kicks left and right and finally punch left and right all accessed by appropriately directing the joystick and use of the fire button.

For every midget killed 100 points are awarded. If a complete formation of three midget fighters are knocked out one tea leaf is awarded and appears in the bottom left of the screen. Gaining five leaves is enough to merit a cup of Oo-Lang Tea again shown at the base of the screen. A new supply of energy can be accessed by pressing the 'T' button once Lee has gained sufficient leaves for the tea. Upto three cups of tea can be gained in a game.

Lee's score, the high score and at which stage he is presently at is shown at the top of each screen. Directly below are two blue energy (or Ki) bars. The one to the left has Lee's name below it while that to the right has the name of his current opponent. With each blow that Lee concedes the energy bar depletes until it reaches critical, at which stage the remaining bar turns brown and a tune cuts in.

Each of the eight warriors has his or her own individual weaponry and fighting technique the first of which being Yen-Pei. Aswell as various kicks and punches this hulk of a man has a deadly Iron Pigtail which he swings around to great effect.

Next to be confronted is the petite figure of Lan-Fang, a woman known as the Fan Fighter. Lan-Fang makes up the inability to punch by launching seemingly harmless but devastating fans.

Then comes Po-Chin, a strongly built man well versed in chemical warfare. He has the ability to throw poison gas bombs which, if they should strike home, leave Lee temporarily paralysed.

Wen-Hu, an opponent with a ghostly secret, is the next to be tackled. On his own Wen-Hu is easily beaten but this man has devine intervention in the form of an apparition (mask) that eminates from his body and floats round the screen. This must be avoided at all costs as contact could prove fatal!.

The fifth warrior is the hefty Wei-Chin, a man with devastating punches and extremely competent in the unusual art of the Boomerang.

Then comes the last of the women, Mei-Ling a very agile and nimble creature deadly in self deffence with the added ability to acurately throw the short sword.

The penultimate opponent is Han-Chen, armed with hand granades, proves to be a worthy and lethal adversary.

Last but not least comes Li-Jen, a mystic warrior with the power of cungering lightening bolts from heavens.

Each of the one to one fight screens has different background scenery in which is hidden a bowl of noddles that begins to descend once combat has begun. If Lee should collect the noddles he obtains Chow Mein power endowing him with temporary invincibility indicated by the border turning blue. 300 points are awarded for each sucessfull attacking move, 100 for avoiding any of the weapons thrown and 1000 for avoiding the ghostly mask. If Lee should beat an opponent without sustaining any injury a generous 5000 points are given otherwise a bonus score proportioinate to the length of the remaining energy bar is obtained.

Richard — CRITICISM

YIE AR KUNG FU II fails to reach the relms set by it's predecessor and tends more to be a game than the bash'em up I expected from the name. The graphics are bland, uninspiring, verfy jerky and slow down dramatically when there are alot of sprites on screen. The tune that cuts in when energy is low does little more than give the feeling of impending doom with no variation of the few sound effects throughout the game. Initially enjoyable though tending to become repetitive after a while of play.

Anthony — CRITICISM

As a follow up YIE AR KUNG FU II is abyssmal. The speed of the game changes depending on the number of characters on screen, and the graphics are nothing short of plain and jerky. KUNG FU one is still the best beat-um-up on the Amstrad with this game coming no where near the standard set by it. As a game on its own it is not too bad, but it still holds very little interest for me.

Mass — CRITICISM

Playability on the fighter midget screens is rather suspect due to the speed that they come across and that the joystick responses are way too slow making it near impossible to turn and face them before they strike. This makes obtaining the Oo-Lang tea extremely difficult. On the other hand the one to one combat is really good fun with each opponent needing a different technique on your part to be easily defeated. Inexplicably in certain combats the opponents just stands there without moving which seems to be defeating the object of the game. The use of colour is good with the latter backgrounds being very pretty though the actual animation tends to be slow and jerky.

PRESENTATION 65%
Two player option. The instructions are easily understood.

GRAPHICS 68%
Good use of colour but jerky animation.

SOUND 64%
Nice tunes but very limited effects

PLAYABILITY 60%
Marred by the slow joystick response.

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 55%
The initial interest is soon lost.

VALUE FOR MONEY 58%
The game really doesn't qualify its price.

OVERALL 60%
A poor follow-up to a highly successful game.

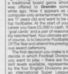
FOOTBALLER OF THE YEAR

Gremlin Graphics, £9.95 cass, joys tick or keys



This football strategy/simulation began life as a design for a traditional board game which was offered to **Gremlin** some while ago. Now it appears as a computer-only entertainment. You are 17 years old and want to be a top footballer. At the start of your career you have £5,000 in cash, 10 'goal cards' and a pair of reasonably talented feet. Your ultimate aim, of course, is to become *Footballer Of The Year* and attend the prestigious award ceremony.

The first decision you make is to decide in which Football Division you want to play – there are five skill levels available, represented by the four English Divisions and an international Super League. Goal cards are more expensive in the higher Divisions, and as they are traded for shots at goal, and the number of cards you can afford has a direct bearing on your performance as a player.



Anthony – CRITICISM

I didn't really enjoy this game, it is much too simplified for me. The icon system does add to the game as do the graphics, which is just as well because there is very little game here. I can't say I will ever be tempted to play this game again as it has nothing to interest me.

The game is icon-driven from the main control menu. Accessing the globe icon reveals the performance of the team paying your wages, the number of goals scored, and the team's morale and progress in the various competitions. The footballer icon leads to the report on the player's personal achievements: status points, the league played in and weekly earnings are shown on bar charts. A general rating is also given which summarises the footballer's overall skill level. An icon, in the form of a scroll, enables the player to attempt to gain a transfer, but it costs money to attract the attention of a scout – and a transfer request isn't always successful. Prices range from just £2,000 to £10,000 a go. A question mark icon conceals 'Incident Cards', which cost £200 a time, and which operate rather like 'Chance' cards in a game of Monopoly – money can be won or lost, transfers obtained and extra goal cards collected.

If things are going very badly, and recovery is unlikely, the game can be abandoned by selecting the 'injured player' icon. There's also the facility to save a game to tape, via the tape icon, if building a career looks likely to take a long time.

The icon in the centre of the control screen – a football boot – leads to the football pitch. Selecting it reveals the player's financial reserves and offers the chance to buy further Goal Cards. The computer chooses the match to be played, and decides the number of shots at goal which the star will get if a Goal Card is cashed in – one, two or three shots are allowed – and part of the strategy of the game lies in using the available Goal Cards to best effect.



Mass – CRITICISM

This really would have been better off as a board game and putting it on a computer adds very little to the concept. It's also far too easy. By continual use of the incident option, you can pile up enormous amounts of money and goal cards which rather negates the point of going up and down leagues. Instead you just stay in the Super League and never have to buy a goal card. The idea was good, and, with a little more play testing, it could have been a really addictive little strategy game.

A mini arcade sequence follows in which the player gets to shoot at the goalmouth after positioning the ball. Sometimes a couple of defenders romp towards the ball, and if a shot isn't taken before they tackle, the opportunity is lost. The goalie does his best to save each shot and, once the attempts at goal are over, the match ends and a teleprinter types up the result before control returns to the main icon screen.

From time to time, random events (taken from the selection of incident cards) affect the player's career. As the would-be football star improves his skills and earns more money, the financial impact of injuries and other misfortunes is increased – but appearance fees and racecourse winnings increase too.

Early in the game, the player has to choose an international side to play for, and once skill levels have been built up the star footballer is

Richard – CRITICISM

It's a great game, there's no denying that. Unfortunately, a lot of the time I fell into the 'What do I do now?' syndrome. I suppose this is mainly due to the openness of the initial options window – it's difficult to know what to choose. Maybe that's part of the game. Nevertheless, I did enjoy playing it to a certain extent (even if I was doing it wrong). It has this fatal of attraction of 'Maybe just one more game' and I continued to play it for quite some time. The graphics go beyond being merely functional and add a considerable amount of enjoyment to the game. Everyone should take a quick look at this one whether they're a football fanatic or not.

called upon to represent the chosen country in international friendlies – all useful goal-scoring opportunities that might influence the judges at the end of the year!

When the season ends, a report on progress is prepared and teams may be promoted or relegated. Talented players may find a transfer deal . . . Finally, the shortlist of candidates for the ultimate accolade is presented and the judges sit in decision . . . Who is going to be *Footballer Of The Year*?





PRESENTATION 81%
Simple icon and a clear screen display.

GRAPHICS 68%
Mainly text with a little detail on the shoot out screen.

SOUND 27%
Informative bleeps.

PLAYABILITY 72%
Easy enough to get into.

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 75%
Keeps you coming back for a bit more.

VALUE FOR MONEY 71%
Not a game you'll keep playing for ever.

OVERALL 76%
Well presented game with a strong theme.

SILENT SERVICE

Microprose, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick and keys

Run silent, run deep. Submarine warfare is one of Hollywood's favourite themes. **Microprose**, the US simulation specialists, have started to convert some of their renowned Commodore games onto the Amstrad. *Silent Service* is one of the first of these.

You take the role of captain of a WWII American submarine, stationed somewhere in the Western Pacific. Just to get you into the swing of things, there is a gunnery practice mission. There is also a series of short scenarios, where you take on some of the convoys which must be faced later in the game. But the real guts of the game is the five convoy patrol scenarios.

The practice mission takes place in safe waters around Midway island, where a few old hulks have been set up for a bit of target practice. The sub is controlled by moving between a number of control screens. Moving a 'captain' figure around these screens and pressing fire accesses the desired option. The screens are: Periscope, Bridge, Map, Instrument Panel, Damage Control, and Quartermaster.

The latter screen shows the score in terms of tonnage sunk. It also shows the number of gun rounds and torpedoes left.

The Damage Control screen shows any damage sustained from depth charges, ramming, or gunfire. Direct hits by enemy missiles affect the submarine in different ways, depending on what damage is done. Damage to the periscope or torpedoes stops them working completely.

Richard — CRITICISM

Looking at this from the point of view of someone who doesn't normally enjoy straight simulations, I found SILENT SERVICE an interesting game to play. It's fun trying to successfully carry out all of the tactics that must be employed in a single operation, and there is a tremendous sense of achievement when a tanker goes down. However, the point that really annoyed me was the graphics – it appeared that no time had been taken on developing them for the Amstrad conversion. It's a shame because it spoiled the game for me.

Anthony — CRITICISM

SILENT SERVICE is the best submarine simulator on the Amstrad, even if it is flawed by the mode one graphics. The simulation section is excellent, with only one tiny flaw in the use of the deck gun – it's able to wipe out just about everything. My favourite mission was Wahoo, which had the destroyer escort getting very upset when I popped up behind each ship, shot it with the deck gun and then crash dived again. Overall a good conversion that has been marred by the unsuitable graphics.

Machinery damage reduce the sub's speed. It also makes it easier for enemy destroyers to track you (their sonar detects the greater engine noise). Damage to the hydrofoils can be critical, either forcing the sub to the surface, or forcing it below its operating depth – and thus to a watery grave.

The rate of water leakage is also constantly monitored, with this information included in the screen display. Serious leakage problems can cause the sub to submerge to a dangerous depth, or even sink it entirely.

The System's screen shows such information as depth, speed, fuel, time, battery level, depth of water beneath the sub, torpedo tube condition and a periscope 'up down' indicator.

The Map screen is where the convoy attacks are planned. There are three levels of magnification, the navigation map, patrol map and attack map. The Patrol Map is most commonly used, and shows any ships within visual or sonar range. The attack plot shows the direction of ships, and is where the detailed approach work is carried out. The battles to evade the escorts also take place in this format.

The four convoy scenarios start with the convoy in sight. The player must try to sink as many ships as possible, and at the same time avoid being sunk. At the end of the battle, you are given a rating. The level of rating earned depends on the tonnage sunk, and takes into account the level of difficulty chosen. There are four basic difficulty levels. One and Two are suitable for beginners, Three is 'realistic', and Four is for budding Admirals. There are seven other difficulty factors, such as dud torpedoes, expert destroyer opponents, and the occurence of difficult repairwork which can only be carried out in port.

The five patrol scenarios simulate a fifty day patrol, which take you deep into enemy waters. The screen shows the whole patrol area of the Western Pacific. The sub patrols its environment until the screen border turns red. When this happens, a convoy has been sighted. Then it's action stations. The patrol map shows the position of the convoy. When the sub has been steered to within 7,000 yards of the convoy, looking through the periscope gives the precise composition, speed and course of the enemy's ships. At this point, the player must decide whether it's worth attacking. The odd cargo ship with heavy escort is best avoided, but oil tankers or troop ships are always worth the trouble – despite the fact they are usually heavily escorted.

The action takes place at four speeds, real time, or twice, four, or eight times as quickly. Armed with this information, you now plan the attack. The object is to get to within firing range without being spotted. Depending on the date of the scenario being played (which changes the equipment available to the escorts) the destroyers spot the submarine at different ranges depending on the speed, depth and profile of the sub. If the submarine is facing the escort it displays a smaller profile (this is due to the sub's long cylindrical shape), therefore it can get closer without being spotted.

Once within range, it's time to let the tin fish rip. There are six forward tubes and four aft. Torpedoes should not be squandered however, as the tubes take some time to reload. You could always try your hand with the deck gun, but this is really only for finishing off badly damaged targets that you don't want to waste a valuable torpedo on.

Mass — CRITICISM

This is one of the best simulations I have ever played. It really creates an atmosphere. There is virtually no luck involved at all. It is immensely satisfying to stalk a convoy for hours,before sending the tanker to the bottom.

The escort battles are great fun, constantly twisting and turning in an attempt to shake off your attackers. The number of factors to be borne in mind mean that this game can never be dull, despite the fact that it isn't finger on the trigger-button stuff. Perhaps more could have been done with the sound effects, and the graphics jerk a bit. Despite this, I'll still be playing this for a long time – O K periscope up!

PRESENTATION 87%
Comprehensive instructions to a complex game.

GRAPHICS 67%
Poor graphics representing the ships.

SOUND 25%
A few rather poor effects, and no tune.

PLAYABILITY 75%
Complex, but a lot of effort has gone into explanation.

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 65%
Long periods of boredom followed by seconds of hectic action.

VALUE FOR MONEY 68%
Wargame freaks will be playing this for quite some time.

OVERALL 73%
Not for arcade freaks, but an absorbing challenge nonetheless.

TT RACER

Digital Integration, £9.95 cass, joystick or keys

Even in an industry full of late delivery dates, this game must take some beating. First promised when the Amstrad was only a twinkle in Alan Sugar's eye, TT Racer has only recently been converted from the Spectrum.

You are at the controls of a motor bike, competing on ten different circuits with the choice of four Grand Prix classes of bike: 80cc, 125cc, 250cc and 500 cc.

The bike is controlled with the joystick. It's up to accelerate, down to brake, left and right to lean. The bike is steered by leaning in the relevant direction – the whole screen tilts as this action is carried out. The screen shows the track from an over-the-handlebars perspective. The bike can be leaned over up to an angle of 45 degrees, and the bike changes course by an appropriate amount. The bike can be righted again by pushing the joystick the other way. At small angles of lean, the bike is self-righting. The fire button is used to change up through the gears. The gears also change down automatically if the revs are low, and up if the revs are high. Holding the fire button down keeps the bike out of gear. This allows you to build up the revs without the bike moving – useful for a quick start.

There are 15 other bikes to race against. You can't collide with these, but there are two other types of crash: the bike can just fall over, or you can run off the course at the corners. If the crash is minimal, you simply change back into first gear, pick the bike up and get moving again – however, if the crash is more serious, shatter marks appear on the screen and you are out of the race.

Play starts at the main menu screen. There are four skill levels to choose from; these determine how cavalier you can be about taking corners and the quality of the opposition.

If you select the practice option, you can practice on the selected track. This not only allows the rider to improve the best lap time, and thus the starting grid position, it also allows the bike to be set up to suit the track. Steering, tyre grip and gear ratios can all be modified. Steering is a matter of personal taste, it alters the speed at which the bike's lean angle changes. With high tyre grip the tyres will wear faster, which is of course only important in a long race. Choosing the correct gear ratio is critical – if the track is tortuous with few fast stretches, then the gear ratios should be close; but if it is a fast track, high gear ratios should be selected for maximum speed. The computer remembers the bike set-up and best lap time for each circuit on each engine size.

Two players can play the game at once by connecting two machines using the Amstrad RS232 interface. The second player's bike replaces one of the computer controlled opposition.

From the main menu, the rider can select club racing or take part in a full Grand Prix season (club racing is like practice with opposition). The track and number of laps can be selected, but if the rider goes for a complete season, a race will be run over a computer selected circuit and over the correct number of laps for the particular engine size. At the end of the race, points are awarded according to the final positions, and the season continues to the next track. At the end of the season, the rider with the greatest points total is the winner.

Mass — CRITICISM

This is rather like a flight simulator for motor bikes – and there is certainly a lot of detail in it. Despite that, it didn't have the instant appeal of some other less detailed games. After playing it for a time, it seemed great liberties could be taken at the corners – even on the highest skill levels. Two-player mode is a good idea, after a while you will soon be better than the computer, but can you beat your mate? The screen tilt is a bit strange as well; if you were riding a bike, you wouldn't get this feeling at all.

Richard — CRITICISM

The overall 'feel' of this game didn't really impress me all that much – I spent a lot of the time getting confused because of the screen tilt which is most disturbing. I only played this on my own and in that fashion it didn't really make me want to return to it. If you've got the chance of playing this with others then you might find it has something going for it, but as it stands it didn't do a lot for me.

Anthony — CRITICISM

TT RACER is too easy by half, even on the Grand Prix level, I managed to win most races and set lap records. The best game must be between two players, the interaction between the players is the only thing that keeps me on this game. The way the horizon banks is very good but can be off-putting to the first time player.

PRESENTATION 75%
Sufficient options – giving a wide selection.

GRAPHICS 69%
Slightly blocky and jerky.

SOUND 68%
Tune on title screen and bike effects.

PLAYABILITY 57%
Somewhat marred by the unusual screen tilt.

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 60%
The interfacing may provide some lasting interest.

VALUE FOR MONEY 56%
For a tenner it doesn't offer much of a challenge.

OVERALL 59%
A biking game that somehow doesn't have the right 'feel' to it.



IMPOSSABALL

Hewsons, £8.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick or keys

Having been involved with computers for several years now, *Impossaball*'s programmer, John Philips, has produced his first arcade action game for the Amstrad. *Impossaball* is described as a multi-level 3D strategy arcade game, and features a relative of all the spherical superheroes currently infiltrating computer games – this one is the *Impossaball*!

The action takes place in eight corridors, all of which are littered with a series of fascinating traps and puzzles. The objective is simple – to travel from the beginning of the first to the end of the eighth, without incurring a loss of more than four lives.

Anthony – CRITICISM

The only bad thing to be said about IMPOSSABALL is that the parallax scrolling has a very slight jerk to it, but this is hardly noticeable when playing. The rest is just magnificent; every so often a game comes out which adds a new twist to the 'Maze' theme, IMPOSSABALL is one of these. The lack of colour is more than made up for by the well defined graphics which move with great speed across the playing area. The sound was a little disappointing, surely a few words with David Whittaker would have had this dancing to tunes like those in GYROSCOPE. A great game which should keep me going for a few weeks.

Richard – CRITICISM

IMPOSSABALL follows much the same theme as REVOLUTION, with a bouncing ball solving puzzles. One major difference however, is that this is a lot simpler to solve. That doesn't mean that it's going to be a one minute wonder though, as the puzzles must to be totally perfected before you can complete a corridor within the designated time limit. The puzzles all contain a slightly different twist; some need careful planning and some simply need quick reactions to avoid the hazards. The use of colour is slightly disappointing as the screen only uses black, white and a dull red which doesn't make it look very exciting. The animation makes up for this as it is reasonably glitch free. IMPOSSABALL is great fun and offers a superb challenge to anyone who fancies something slightly unusual.

On his travels, the sphere encounters numerous cylinders that either hang from the roofs of corridors or protrude from the base. To complete a level, all of the cylinders must be struck by *Impossaball* and flattened. However, the ball has to prove itself to be really worthy by negotiating the spikes and tendrils that surround the cylinders – one false move means the immediate loss of one of the four lives. Luckily extra lives can be gained when a player has earned over 5000 points.

The corridors themselves are displayed in 3D fashion, viewed from front to back; the sphere bounces in and out of the playing screen in true perspective. As it furthers its adventure in leaps and bounds, the screen scrolls horizontally so that it always remains in the middle of the action. Each corridor must be negotiated within the time limit which is displayed on the right hand side of the status line – failing to do this also results in the loss of a life.

Some traps are quite devious, for example, there are rings which lie (apparently harmlessly) on the floor which have double functions. These rings provide extra time when first encountered, however, a second landing causes loss of life. When a life is lost, Impossaball is returned to the start of the current corridor. Squashed cylinders don't reappear, but their protective spikes remain causing more and more problems for the spherical one.

Mass – CRITICISM

Although the graphics and sound effects in IMPOSSABALL are nothing amazing, the great beauty of this game is the superb playability. The use of colour is rather poor as the screens are mainly black and white (with a splattering of deep red), but that is made up for by the glitch free animation. The individual puzzles are set out in such away that (with a little common-sense and practice) they can be solved in the shortest possible time – giving you plenty time to complete the corridor. Controlling the ball is simple as you have the ability to direct it whilst in flight. An intriguing and fun game to play.

PRESENTATION 75%
Informative title screen and high-score table.

GRAPHICS 78%
Well defined, but a bit sparse on colour.

SOUND 40%
Grating tune, meagre spot FX.

PLAYABILITY 84%
Simple controls, with adequate responses.

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 82%
As soon as some puzzles are solved there's a great compulsion to delve further into the game.

VALUE FOR MONEY 80%
A fair price as it should keep you occupied for some time.

OVERALL 82%
A neat game that should capture your imagination.

PETER SHILTON'S 'HANDBALL MARADONA!'

Grand Slam, £6.95 cass, joystick or keys

Contrary to its suggestive title, this game has nothing to do with that controversial incident in the 1986 World Cup. Instead, it is a football simulation which gives one or two players control of the goalkeeper. The object is to stop the ball hitting the back of the net by positioning the goalie in its path. To do so there are seven moves at your disposal: jump up, dive up left and right, dive centre left and right, and dive down left and right. There is also the ability to move left, right, back and forth in front of the goal-mouth.

Mass — CRITICISM

This game's graphics are hardly deserving of the name, with stick men jerkily running around and the ball making devastating curves on later levels. The sound effects are of a similar nature with just the bouncing of the ball on the ground and the roar of the crowd if a shot is saved or goes in. Funnily enough the game does have a certain addictivity, mainly due to the satisfaction gained when the more difficult shots are saved. Unfortunately that's all there is to this – saving shots. Somewhat limited, but fun all the same.

Richard — CRITICISM

What a corny title this is – and what relevance does it have? As games go PETER SHILTON'S HANDBALL MARADONA is nothing special, the whole thing left me most uninspired. The graphics are often weak and appear rather fragile, doing little to resemble real-life football players. I wasn't too keen on the selection menu: as you select an option a small ball rumbles up and down – it all seemed unnecessary and pointless. This won't appeal to many people – even football enthusiasts will be disappointed.

Before play commences you have the choice of which team's goal you wish to defend. This team is chosen from a list of sixteen, containing a mixture of first, second, third and fourth division sides.

The action takes place in a single goalmouth, which is attacked from one of three different angles. Depending on the angle of attack, the goal-mouth appears in either the top left, top right or centre of the screen. The number of attacking players varies from one to three (if there are several, they may pass to each other before a shot is taken). The opposition's shots are always on target, so it is up to you to stop the ball. There are three playing options; Practice (in which you must attempt to save a random collection of five shots), Play Game and Skill Upgrading. In one-player mode the computer randomly chooses an opposing team to play against. The match consists of two halves in which you must try to stop four shots per half – the more you save, the better your team's chance of winning. When two players compete, the difficulty of the shots you are required to save is proportionate to the skill level of your opponent.

There are sixteen skill levels – marked 'A' to 'P'. In the skill upgrading section, you must save all of four shots in order to move up a grade. If this task is completed successfully, a skill code appears oh screen. This code is then entered at the beginning of a new game, placing the player at his previously attained level and removing the chore of having to work up from the bottom.

Anthony — CRITICISM

This is much too hard for most people, especially around level D. The graphics leave a lot to be desired, being just simple re-defined characters. One factor in the game's favour is the attention to detail in the movement of the ball. The swerves and plays made by the opposing players are extremely accurate. There is very little fun attached to this idea.

A.P.S

PRESENTATION 51%
Easily grasped instructions; and an option menu between playing screens.

GRAPHICS 35%
Dull, small jerky match-stick men.

SOUND 21%
No tune, and very poor sound effects.

PLAYABILITY 48%
Initially easy, becoming a matter of routine.

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 39%
Fun for a few hours but has no lasting appeal.

VALUE FOR MONEY 30%
Not enough of a game to merit the asking price.

OVERALL 34%
Simple in concept, but poorly implemented.


GRANGE HILL - THE GAME
GH
Victory House,
Leicester Place,
London, WC2H 7NB.
Telephone 01-439 0666
Argus Press Software Group
Available for Spectrum,
Commodore 64
and Amstrad: £9.95
Grange Hill © Phil Redmond Enterprises Ltd.


AMSTRAD 8.95 COMMODORE 8.95 SPECTRUM 7.95
It was a one-in-a-million accident — but Number Five, designed to be a strategic artificially intelligent weapons system, the most sophisticated robot on the planet, has escaped — and has come to the conclusion that he's alive! Now the scientist who put him together wants to take him apart
SHORT CIRCUIT™
again to find out what went wrong. The president of Nova Robotics wants to capture him before the weapons he's carrying kill millions of civilians. And the security chief wants to blow him up so that he can get home in time for dinner. YOU are Number Five...YOU are alive and YOU have got to stay that way
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I'm humble – yes humble! Good ol' TC has finally dropped a clanger and therefore must grovel before you. Did anyone spot the deliberate mistakes on the *Eidolon* map? The first part was in fact in Issue 15, and not in Issue 12 as was originally stated.

Secondly, the tips on how to destroy the last Dragon were missing – a situation which will be rectified this month. On the map front we have a full map of *Firelord* from **Hewson**, and a map listing all the locations in *Infodroid* – Who would have guessed the causeway city was round?

Generally, routines that appear on these pages will appear with instructions on how they should be used. If the POKEs are for a tape version of a game, this is how to use them . . .

a) Type in the POKE and save it on a separate tape.
b) Reset the machine and load the POKE in.
c) Insert the cassette containing the game you are about to POKE. Rewind the tape and press PLAY on the recorder.
d) Type RUN to run the POKE program.

If all goes well the game program should load and run. Sometimes the POKE program will not show up the title page, or the game may not appear to load in the usual way. Just be patient and let the tape run. Follow any on screen instructions that may come up — for instance, you may have to press a key before the program will load the next file. If the program still won't load or you get a *Syntax error* or some other programming error, reset the machine and reload the POKE program, correct any errors, resave the POKE and try again from step B . . .

EIDOLON

The final guardian has seven heads, each one representing a dragon from one of the other seven levels – look at the maps in Issues 15 and 16. Starting at Level One, use the type and number of fireballs that are required for the dragon on each level from one to seven (three red, four yellow, five green and so on).

When this sequence is complete do it all over again. The Dragon should now blow up and reveal . . . find that one out for yourself . . . (It may be helpful to have someone else pressing the space bar to collect the stray fireballs). If you find that this sequence doesn't work, it is probably because two fireballs were mixed and collected for extra power.

STOP PRESS: it seems that the Amstrad version of *Eidolon* has an extra creature on level seven – **Grep**. To get rid of him use ten red fireballs in rapid succession.

IKARI WARRIORS

(Elite)

Cy Booker has struck again with POKEs that change the Ikari Warriors into human tanks. Line 270 allows two people to play on the keyboard – to access this option, Player Two presses '1' to choose the keyboard – even though the option is not given on screen. The POKE works on both the disk and tape versions, so just ENTER the listing, type RUN and then press ENTER or RETURN.

```
100 REM IKARI WARRIORS
TAPE AND DISC BY Cy Booker.
110 '
120 OPENOUT 'dummy.cy':
MEMORY &12BF: CLOSEOUT
130 MODE 0 : FOR I=0 TO 15 :
READ X : INK I,X : NEXT : BOR-
DER 2
140 WINDOW $0,2,19,2,8
150 LOAD '!SCREEN.BIN'
160 LOAD '!WARRIORS'
170 POKE &6EAB,LIVES : POKE
&692A,111 : REM LIVES 1-255
180 POKE &6914,24 : POKE
&692A,1 : REM INFINITE LIVES
190 POKE &6A38,24 : REM
IMMORTALITY
200 POKE &6B98,&B7 : REM
INFINITE BOMBS
210 POKE &6B27,&B7 : REM
INFINITE BULLETS
220 POKE &7012,24 : REM
IMMUNE TO WARRIORS.
230 POKE &71F1,201 : REM
IMMUNE TO TIME BOMB
240 POKE &7046,24 : REM
IMMUNE TO GRENADES
250 POKE &1B32,201 : REM
STOPS WARRIORS FIRING
260 POKE &1B92,201 : REM
STOPS HELICOPTER FIRING
270 POKE &746A,0 : REM LETS
TWO PEOPLE ON THE
KEYBOARD
280 CALL &FFD0
290 DATA 13,6,3,15,16,0,
1,2,14,26,24,9,12,21,22,19
```

GAUNTLET

(US Gold)

Lots of people have discovered this tip for infinite lives on *Gauntlet*. In case you are not one of them, here's how to do it: in one-player mode, start a second player when the strength gets below 175 points. Kill off the first character and enter the name. When the new character's strength gets too low, start Player One again and kill off Player Two. As long as both characters do not die it should be possible to get through all the levels.

Now a second tip for tape users only. When the game stops to load the next eight levels, wind the cassette forward to any of the levels and load your chosen level instead. The level numbers will still only go up in sequence, but a whole new set of levels is ready to play.


AM-TIPS
FIRELORD
THE MAP
COMPILED BY
JOHN SMITH, SOUTH-
AMPTON
STORE
STORE
STORE
STORE
QUEEN

SPELLS:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14

A B C D CHARACTERS WITH INFORMATION

PLACES TO TRADE OBJECTS

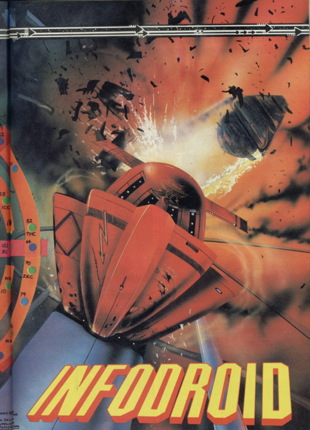
F BEWARE THE FIRE!

LOCATIONS FOR DIRECTIONS

CRYSTAL DESTROYERS

ENERGY DRAIN BUBBLES


KEY:
JUNCTION ROOM
COMPANY ROOM
GARAGES
INFORMATION
INFODROID INTERFACE
TRI RADIAL
NORTHWEST QUADRANT
NORTHEAST QUADRANT
ERIDON ARC
DELTA ARC
GAMMA ARC
SIGMA ARC
DRUTTI RADIAL
TSANG RADIAL
GREAT CIRCULAR
SOUTHWEST QUADRANT
SOUTHEAST QUADRANT
AID
KT
XIC
OTA
PAL
DDP
MSC
AGE
N
PVG
LSO
THC
ZEC
DI
ICC
AT
WINS
LSD
RI



INFODROID



HANDBALL MARADONA

(Grand Slam)

A tiplet from our very own Mafia-man Mass. Using the initials **M V** with the skill code 2237 should put you on level L.

BACK TO REALITY

(Mastertronic)

Another tip that just appeared without a name. A wee message to **A N Onymous** of Stirling: put your address on next time please. We do like to credit people with their tips, so just to make sure why not write your name and address on the back of the envelope?

Making anti-matter can be a pain – so all you have to do is mix two objects, take the mixture, and add one more each time. Now mix Nitrogen cylinder and Methane, Diamond powder, incubator and cloning gun. Now get the atom stabiliser and find the room that shakes. Take the cosmic rays, mix the cloning gun with it and . . . da dah!!!!

TEMPEST

(Electric Dreams)

Our old friend **Jon Rocatis** from across the sea in Denmark has sent in a great little POKE for *Tempest*. In addition to infinite lives, you are also given infinite zappers – definite overkill.

This POKE is for the tape version and should be typed in as below and saved to another tape. Type RUN and start up your Tempest tape. The game should load and run as normal.

```
1000 CALL &bc02: MODE 2
1010 lin=1140: pc=&be80
1020 chk=0
1030 FOR n=0 TO 19
1040 READ a$
1050 IF a$='END' then POKE
pc,&bd: POKE pc+1,&84: CALL
&BEa1
1060 a=VAL('&'+a$)
1070 chk=chk  a
1080 POKE pc,a
1090 pc=pc+1
1100 NEXT
1110 READ a$
1120 IF VAL ('&'+a$)=chk THEN
lin=lin+10 : GOTO 1020
1130 PRINT "I'll tell you a secret.
There's an error in line ";lin
1140 DATA
21,bd,be,cd,d4,bc,22,be,be,79,
32,c0,be,21,00,01,11,00,00,0e,
0801
1150 DATA
41,df,be,be,fd,21,00,10,06,
07,cd,78,01,3e,0b,cd,c2,01,qaf,
32,07d7
1160 DATA
ec,1e,32,35,1f,32,51,24,
01,7e,fa,ed,79,0e,ff,21,00,10,
cd,16,0737
1170 DATA END
```

DRAGON'S LAIR

(Software Projects)

Between Massimo and myself we seem to have picked up quite a few tips for *Dragon's Lair*. Next month we will print a Cheat Mode, but for now you'll have to make do with the tips.

Giddy Goons

Before the program will let you jump onto the next platform, the Giddy Goon occupying your present platform must be killed. Only the jump between the second (short L-shaped) platform and the third (long L-shaped) platform is crucial: it should only be attempted if Dirk is standing right on the edge of the short platform.

Falling Disk One

Try to get to the bottom left of the platform before jumping onto the disk. Once on the disk, run to the centre and wait for the wind to blow. Don't run straight towards the Air Genie – instead run towards the far side of the platform against the wind. This means that Dirk has a much longer distance to be blown back along, and so increases his chances of survival. After six or seven Genies, the platform appears on the far left hand side of the screen. The simplest method to get onto it is to run at it and jump. Eventually this movement becomes second nature . . .

Skull Hallway

A very tricky screen to master, as timing is all important. HINT – if you have an old 'leaf' joystick, take it apart so that you can tap the contacts directly, but make sure the fire button is accessible. The moves should be done in the order that follows.

1) Tap forward to avoid the skulls
2) Press the fire button to shatter the first hand
3) Tap forward to avoid the skulls
4) Press the fire button until the two hands have been shattered
5) Pull back on the joystick to avoid the bats
6) Push right to avoid bats a second time
7) Push left to avoid the slime
8) Push forward to avoid the slime again
9) Push right to finish the screen

Weapons Room

1) Press Fire to avoid the ball and chain
2) Push left to avoid the jug
3) Press fire to push the wall back
4) Push right to avoid the axe
5) Push right to avoid the shield
6) Press fire to push the wall back
7) Push left to avoid the axe
8) Press fire to destroy the shield
9) Push forward to avoid the axe
10) Finally push right to avoid the fireball and leave the screen



The Tentacle Room

1) Press fire to kill the first tentacle
2) Push right to avoid the second
3) Push forward to avoid the next
4) Hit fire to kill a tentacle
5) Hit fire to kill another one
6) Push right to move closer to the door
7) Push right again to exit the screen

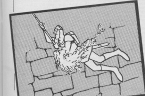


The Burning Ropes

Hold the fire button until Dirk is on the third slab.

When the rope is at its furthest point away from him, press fire and hold the joystick left as soon as Dirk is in the air. Wait until Dirk has swung twice and push the joystick left while pressing the fire button. As soon as Dirk reaches the furthest slab, press the fire button and push left at the same time. As the disk rises, press the fire button and push right at the same time – release just before the disk gets to the next level. Now jump until Dirk reaches the slab before the next set of two ropes.

Press fire and push right as the rope is just about to go straight down. Swing twice and then grab the next rope. Immediately leap onto the last slab by pressing fire and pushing right. Hold the joystick left and the fire button down until the disk is close to the platform above and then release both. Now use the same tactics as for the first level ropes, until Dirk is safely across to the other side.



Second Disk

Play this exactly the same way as the first disk, but be careful as the wind blows half as strong – for twice as long. The main problem we had here was running off the end of the disk we were trying to stay close to.

CheckerBoard

Move to the square next to left of the one the Knight first appears at, and as soon as it appears press fire. Avoiding the electricity, move to the gate and off the screen.

The Dragon's Lair

The key to this game is to get Singe to blast the bush that blocks Dirk's way. Once this is done, follow the inlay instructions to destroy the dragon.



75 Disk copies of Little Computer People to be won!!

Win an LCP research kit for your Amstrad's disk drive!

Activision always put a lot of work into researching their games. In keeping with this policy, they have now moved their *Little Computer People* Research Group to the Amstrad in order to 'extend and capitalise upon the wealth of data already gathered.'

For those of you that are not too familiar with the LCP Research Group project, the findings of the AMTIX! crew are recounted on page 16. They tell the story of LCPs first being found living inside Commodore 64s, from where they were convinced to leave and take up residence in other computers. This was mainly due to **Activision**'s invention of LCP artificial habitats, which created an environment where the little people could live – regardless of computer format.

It is now possible for Amstrads to support this artificial environment software. Unfortunately, you MUST be a disk drive owner in order to participate in the experiment, because the artificial habitat of the LCPs is very complicated and requires disk accessing.

Activision are very keen for as many people as possible to win this competition, and therefore receive their very own *Little Computer Person*. It's VERY easy, and there are 75 disks containing the LCP Project for the winners.

What can be so easy a task that everybody stands a good chance of winning? Well dear readers, what you must do is to rearrange the photograph of an LCP's house that has unfortunately fallen to pieces – it was probably built by the same contractor that built AMTIX! Towers. Put it back together so that it resembles the wonderful LCP penthouse as featured in the photo on page 18.

Send the rebuilt house to: **WALLS COME TUMBLING DOWN, AMTIX! Towers, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB** – to arrive here before the 5th of March.

Don't forget that with 75 disk copies of the game on offer, there's every chance that YOUR entry will be pulled out. So get out your glue/sellotape/sticking plasters and enter now – even if you're not the most artistic of readers!



A TASTE OF SIBERIA

The temperature outside the Towers is minus 10 and it's snowing hard. The forecasters claim a Siberian winter is with us. To top it all the heating is not working properly in the office and there's no water so we can't even enjoy a hot drink (correction we have water so where's my drink?) Things are bad, fellow adventurers, but don't despair all is not lost!

This month's adventure section contains two new games from Incentive, released on their new Medallion Adventure label and designed by means of the Graphic Adventure Creator. There is also an excellent trilogy from Rainbird, and an Arcana section crammed with solutions and hints, including the full solution for Dracula.

If the weather continues to be so inclement it will give us adventurers some unexpected bonus computer time. Keep warm until we meet again.

SILICON DREAMS

Rainbird, £19.95 disk

Following the success of the *Jewels of Darkness* trilogy, **Rainbird** and **Level 9** have scored yet another success! This time they have revamped and repackaged *Snowball*, *Return to Eden* and *The Worm in Paradise*, and released them in a three game set entitled *Silicon Dreams*.

SNOWBALL:– 'Twas a number of years ago that I first played *Snowball* on my trusty Commodore. I remember it well, because I played solidly for about twelve hours and thoroughly enjoyed it. It still ranks among my favourite adventures.

You play the part of Kim Kimberley, secret agent extraordinaire, whose mission is to safeguard the interstar transport, Snowball 9, against sabotage.

When you are awakened from your modified freezer coffin, you know something must be very wrong. Your task is to discover what is amiss, and put it right – Simple Huh?

You will have lots to do and plenty to explore, for there are quite literally thousands of locations! The game unfolds wonderfully, pulling you into its own world until you become totally engrossed.

The new version has everything that the classic had – PLUS: Graphics, Extended Text descriptions, an English language interpreter, and generally a more user-friendly feel to it. Play it, but don't get caught by Nightingales.

RETURN TO EDEN:– Once again you play the part of Agent Kim. Though you saved Snowball 9, the crew have somehow got the wrong end of the stick and they blame you for its sabotage. They were about to make you eat vacuum when you escaped, nicked a strato-glider and took off for Eden. You land safely, but the crew of the Snowball have not given up, and still intend to punish you.

Your first task here is to avoid their punishment. Once you have survived this onslaught, you must go onwards to the domed city where you have to ensure the safe arrival of the Snowball and crew. Will you forgive and forget?

Apparently the mechanical inhabitants of Enoch (the domed city) are likely to destroy Snowball 9 if things are not corrected. Once again the crew's fate depends on you.

As in *Snowball*, the game has been revamped to include (among other things) a good parser and help routine. Although I don't enjoy it as much as *Snowball*, it is still very, very good. However, after a while the little animals in the woodland do tend to become a pain in the Trad-clads. – Have fun with the tree-lift!

WORM IN PARADISE:– Unfortunately one of these three had to be the worst, and this is it! You are a citizen of Enoch, 100 years after the time of *Return to Eden*. The city is run as a benevolent bureaucracy, and it is truly a paradise for the silent majority, with peaceful streets and full employment. Even so it is a real challenge (it says here) for those with higher ambitions, especially if you intend to save the world. A case of Dagget or no Dagget!

You begin the game in a Dream Sequence from which it is a shame to have to wake up. I enjoyed this bit. From here you can explore the city, get into trouble, sell your non-vitals and generally get totally confused. You'll love the Transport system.

I'm going back to find my luggage!

Silicon Dreams is very good. You have three **Level 9** adventures on tape for under a ïiver each. You also get the nice **Rainbird** box and a novella full of information and background material.

All three games have such lovely functions as, Ram, Save/Load, oops command; 'Get All'; 'Examine all except the Behemoth', 'Get the flask and fill it with water', . . . what wonderful stuff.

Why are you still reading this? Go and buy it!

Atmosphere	81%
Plot	77%
Interaction	85%
Lastability	79%
Value for Money	80%
Overall	78%

WINTER WONDERLAND

Incentive (Medallion), £7.95 cass,

This is one of two recent releases from **Incentive** on their new **Medallion Adventure** label, and is produced with that marvellous utility, the *Graphic Adventure Creator*.

Written by Tim Walsha and Simon Lipscomb, it opens with you beside the wreckage of your Cessna light aircraft in the middle of a vast snowfield. The plane seems irreversibly damaged by the rough landing, and you have no choice but to trudge off into the snowy wastes (despite the arctic conditions, it is easy enough to stay warm). Your objective is to reach the lost city of Shangri-La, from where escape to the outside world is possible.

It is from this point onwards that the game deteriorates and becomes a case of 'guess which object you need in order to overcome this problem'! A large amount of equipment is needed, but there is a limit on the amount which can be carried at any one time. This does not help in any way, it simply turns *Winter Wonderland* into the type of 'adventure' which forces the player to save their position before buying anything or going anywhere – finishing the game becomes impossible if you don't. This lack of carrying ability also means a lot of to-ing and fro-ing which becomes very tedious all too quickly.

The first hint I got of the game being disappointing came when I asked to examine the large grizzly bear which blocked my path, the computer replied 'Nothing worth reporting back about'. Perhaps the authors feel blase about being menaced by Herculean mammals, but I don't! I think a lot more could have been put into this and many other situations – the Giant Bee encounter for example. If a choice has to be made, (and in the case of the GAC, I think it does), I would prefer fewer locations and more atmosphere than vice-versa.

The screen layout is acceptable, as are the graphics – although I soon turned those off, as they don't actually add anything to the sparse ambience created by the text. In fact it wasn't very long before I turned the computer off! I like adventure games – not guessing games. All that I seemed to be doing (apart from loading and saving my position) was buying and/or hiring from A to give to, or use on, B. The only real adventure-type-problem I came across was one which involved soap and a master key in the hotel, and that didn't take long to work out.

Although the game has obviously been worked on carefully, there is evidence of slight inattention to detail (for example in the way into and exit from particular locations). There is also a somewhat sparse use of the 'examine' command.

Winter Wonderland is very basic. The GAC is a very good utility, so therefore its use should surely produce better adventures than this. However this particular attempt should not be a total disaster for **Incentive**, although it is pricey for what's on offer.



Atmosphere	40%
Plot	35%
Interaction	48%
Lastability	40%
Value for money	30%
Overall	39%

THE LEGEND OF APACHE GOLD

Incentive (Medallion), £7.95 cass

This is Peter Torrance's latest offering to the world of adventure games. What do you mean 'Peter who?' He's the guy who wrote *Subsunk*, *Seabase Delta* and *Spy Trek*. This **Graphic Adventure Creator** produced program casts you as Luke Warm (I know, I know!) – a lonesome cowboy, skint but still able to dream. In the local saloon you overhear an old-timer jabbering on about the *Legend of Apache Gold*, and the strange indian powers that protect it. Disregarding the possible dangers, you decide to make that gold your own.

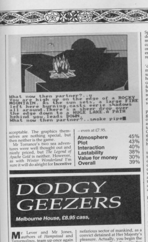
Having fed your horse, you set off – only to be quickly captured and imprisoned in a wigwam by a tribe of hostile redskins. Here you find a sheet of paper which gives you more than a ghost of a chance to escape, then it's time to explore the camp.

You must repair your wagon before you can leave, but this is not too difficult (although the crocodile problem is a little obscure – if not stupid). Soon the 'Wild West' opens up to you and you can explore and ponder to your heart's content.

Subsunk and Seabase Delta are two games I quite enjoyed. Though simple and somewhat sparse they contained a certain something which made them interesting! The Legend of Apache Gold however, lacks this 'something'. Once a few puzzles have been conquered there is no incentive (no pun intended) to carry on. So I didn't.

The screen layout is alright, with location graphics covering the top third of the screen and the text being shown below.

The parser is adequate and the descriptions and atmosphere are



acceptable. The graphics themselves are nothing special, but then neither is the game.

Mr Torrance's two sea adventures were well thought out and nicely priced, but *The Legend of Apache Gold* is neither. However, as with *Winter Wonderland* I'm sure it will do alright for **Incentive** – even at £7.95.

Atmosphere	45%
Plot	43%
Interaction	40%
Lastability	38%
Value for money	30%
Overall	39%

DODGY GEEZERS

Melbourne House, £8.95 cass,

Mr Lever and Mr Jones, authors of *Hampstead* and *Terrormolinos*, team up once again to bring you their latest 'real-life adventure' – *Dodgy Geezers*.

This particular piece of software places you among the more nefarious sector of mankind, as a convict detained at Her Majesty's pleasure. Actually, you begin the game in your cell on the very day of your release. Three long years was the sentence given to you for your part in the Long Ditton Spaghetti Caper. Now you've done your time, and can once more join the real world. You come out itching to pull off that one lucrative job which would enable you to live in luxury for the rest of your life.

Once free of the prison you 'duck and dive' around the murky streets, picking up necessary information and objects to help you pull off this 'brilliant caper'. You may also discover facts about certain dastardly do-badders whom you can choose to recruit into your gang. The game ends when the crime has been successfully carried out.

Dodgy Geezers comes in two parts. In part one the crime and gang are selected. When this is completed you are supplied with a password to enter part two and take part in the actual crime itself. On the flip side of the cassette is the *Dodgy Geezers* song, in which there may be some useful tips to help you through the adventure.

I found the game fairly difficult to get into, and would have liked to spend more time with it, alas deadlines would not allow. The dread two hundredth move soon came and went, whereupon my wellies were filled with cement, and the man in white Gucci shoes threw me into a watery grave and delivered the 'Wanna nuvva stab atit, eh?' message.

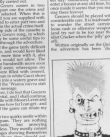
However, I do feel that Geezers has potential, and I shall continue to do battle with Messrs Lever and Jones to see how far I can get – and indeed if the game can retain my interest.

One or two quirks nestle within the program. They are nothing too drastic, but annoying nonetheless. They mostly consist of messages showing themselves when perhaps they should not. Tarrying in the prison visitors' room results in the 'George gives you a slip of paper' routine repeating itself ad infinitum. Also, the dogs in the breakers' yard are quite clever . . . apparently being able to stalk, growl and menace you whilst asleep! Yet another quirk is that, in trying to lift the manhole cover you are informed that it is too heavy to attempt single-handed . . . even when you're accompanied by Tweedle(???).

A time elapse routine is included, and you are periodically reminded that it is Friday night, Saturday morning etc. I must admit I like the licensing hours in this place, wherever it may be – they even outdo Ludlow on a market day! Admittedly one cannot enter a boozer at any old time, but once inside it seems that you may stay there forever.

Geezers should be played with considerable care. It is inadvisable to wander the street carrying loose cash or offensive weapons (and try not to be too near that idiot Cracker when the 'jelly' goes off).

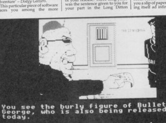
Written originally on the *Quill*, the adventure has been 'doc-

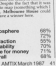


tored' by the **Melbourne House** marvels, to make it look nice and accept linked inputs. The usual verb noun sentences can now be joined together using and, now or a comma.

The graphics, which show the result of certain actions that you might take (rather than depict a location), are large and quite nice. They also display the potential members of your gang pictorially. The text is a prominent yellow on a blue background.

I quite enjoyed *Dodgy Geezers* (more than might be said for *Terrormolinos!*), and am determined to commit the crime at some later date. Despite the fact that it was nasty to map (something which I hate!!), **Melbourne House** could well have a winner here.



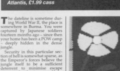


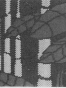
Atmosphere	68%
Plot	72%
Interaction	55%
Lastability	70%
Value for money	71%
Overall	68%



ESCAPE FROM KHOSHIMA

Atlantis, £1.99 cass



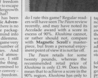


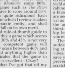
The dateline is sometime during World War II, the place is somewhere in Burma. You were captured by Japanese soldiers fourteen months ago – since then your home has been a POW camp – deeply hidden in the dense jungle.

Security in this particular section of hell is somewhat sparse, as the Emperor's forces believe the jungle itself to be a sufficient deterrent to minimise escape attempts by the inmates. However, one day, due to a slight fever, you find yourself almost totally alone within the camp . . . the temptation is too great: with the taste of freedom on your lips you prepare to escape into the sweltering undergrowth and . . . who knows what?

Escape from Khoshima has been written with the **Graphic Adventure Creator** (although there is no mention of this on the packaging!), and has put my mind into something of a dilemma. Although I enjoyed the game very much, it did contain a number of annoying idiosyncrasies. And though it hardly oozed atmosphere from my monitor, I still couldn't stop playing the thing. Once started I was determined to get to the end, reach the convoy – and ultimately to attain freedom. And amid much bad language and headbanging, I got quite a kick from doing so. The aforementioned dilemma is how do I rate this game? Regular readers will have seen *The Pawn* review recently, and may have noted its Accolade award with a score in excess of 90%. *Khoshima* cannot, or rather should not, compare with **Magnetic Scroll**'s masterpiece, but from a personal enjoyment point of view it is not far off.

The Pawn retails for some twenty pounds, whereas the recommended retail price of *Khoshima* is only £1.99. Does this mean that to achieve a score in the 90% region, *Khoshima* has only to be a tenth as good as *The Pawn* – taking into account the comparative prices against the amount of pleasure derived? The percentages awarded to adventures cannot be relative to other adventures reviewed. If they were, and I awarded *Khoshima* some 80%, then a game such as *The Pawn* would have to score around 55% which is quite ridiculous! Each adventure which I review is taken as a separate entity, and shall stand or fall on its own merit.



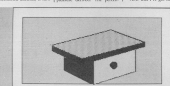


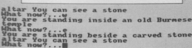
A good rule-of-thumb guide to follow is this: a game which scores between 30% and 45% is not very good; a competent game will probably score between 46% and 60%; and anything higher than this indicates that the game in question is excellent – Okay?

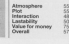
Now that I've got that off my chest, let's go back to the Burmese jungle! Bribing a sentry with his favourite brand of cancer stick will yield a key to unlock the medicine cabinet, the contents of which are a knockout. The knife and meat are necessary for prolonged survival as is the pool of water where the animals quench their own thirst. Go north to the cave for a kip before drinking your fill, or you may make a meal of yourself.

There are, perhaps, too many sudden deaths in *Khoshima*, drinking at the waterfall, climbing the vines, shooting the gun and so on; save your position fairly often to prevent having to start from scratch. If you have found the lighter and managed to fill it – but still seem to be going round in circles, go to the waterfall and you should walk it from there.

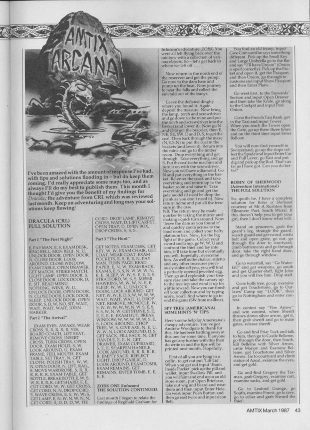
Escape from Khoshima is an enjoyable little game. The puzzles are fairly easy to master and quite logical. Mapping the jungle can become a bit of a pain, but persevere – it is worth it. The screen layout is neat enough, with the top third occupied by a graphic representation of your whereabouts (or not if you turn them off). The picture standard is not too high, but it's quite bearable. The text descriptions are a little sparse, but there's sufficient atmosphere and a sense of 'being there' to make up for this. If you have £1.99 to spend on an adventure, then I strongly suggest you buy this one.







Atmosphere	55%
Plot	55%
Interaction	48%
Lastability	50%
Value for money	75%
Overall	57%



I've been amazed with the amount of response I've had, with tips and solutions flooding in – but do keep them coming. I'd really appreciate some maps too, and as always I'll do my best to publish them. This month I thought I'd give you the benefit of my findings for *Dracula*; the adventure from CRL which was reviewed last month. Keep on adventuring and long may your solutions keep flowing!

DRACULA (CRL)
FULL SOLUTION

Part 1 "The First Night"

E, PAYMAN, E, S, EXAM DESK, RING BELL, SIGN REGI, N, U, UNLOCK DOOR, OPEN DOOR, N, CLOSE DOOR, LOOK AROUND, CLOSE WINDOW, EXAM TABLE, OPEN DRAWER, GET MATCH, STRIKE MATCH, LIGHT LAMP, OPEN DOOR, S, CLOSE DOOR, LOCK DOOR, D, E, SIT, READ MENU, NOTHING, WINE, W, U,, UNLOCK DOOR, OPEN DOOR, N, CLOSE DOOR, LOCK DOOR, SLEEP, UNLOCK DOOR, OPEN DOOR, S, D, W, NO, SIT, WAIT, WAIT, WAIT, WAIT, JOHN HARKER.

Part 2 "The Arrival"

EXAM EYES, AWAKE, WEAR CROSS, R, R, R, R, R, YES, BOARD COACH, LIFT SEAT, REMOVE CROSS, INSERT CROSS, TURN CROSS, OPEN DOOR, EXAM HOLD, S, W, LOOK AROUND, U, EXAM FRAME, FEEL MOUTH, EXAM TABLE, SET TRAY, N, GET CLOTH, POLISH TRAY, W, W, N, OPEN DOOR, N, LIFT, RAIL, S, MOVE WARDROBE, S, R, R, R, R, R, R, EXAM TABLE, GET BOTTLE, BREAK BOTTLE, W, S, W, R, R, R, R, GET SHARD, E, E, CUT CORD, W, W, GET CROSS, GET CORD, N, N, DROP CORD, S, WAVE CROSS, E, S, W, W,-S, GET LAMP, E, N, W, N, W, N, N, GET CORD, S, D, D, D, W, TIE CORD, DROP LAMP, REMOVE CROSS, WAIT, D, LIFT CARPET, OPEN TRAP, D, OPEN BOX, DROP CROSS, S, S, S.

Part 3 "The Hunt"

GET NOTES, EXAM DESK, GET KEY, W, W, EXAM CHAIR, GET COAT, WEAR COAT, EXAM POCKETS, E, S, E, E, N, PAY MAN, TURN PAGE, READ PAPER, E, N, W, EXAM RACK, EXAMS, E, S, S, N, W, W, W, N, E, E, SLEEP, W, W, S, E, E, E, S, STRATFORD, W, S, S, MESSR HAWKINS, W, W, W, N, E, E, SLEEP, W, W, U, UNLOCK DOOR, LOOK AROUND, GET NET, W, W, E, D,S, W, W, W, W, WAIT, WAIT, WAIT, U, DROP NET, REMOVE, MONOCLE, W, S, W, W, W, W, W, N, W, S, E, S, S, S, W, N, W, GET STONE, S, E, E, E, E, E, EXAM HUT, BREAK WINDOW, W, W, W, W, W, S, E, S, LOOK AROUND, CHOP TREE, W, S, GIVE AXE, N, E, U, W, W, N, LOOK AROUND, D, S, GET SACK, FILL SACK, N, GET HANDLE, E, E, N, GET DRAWER, EXAM CUPBOARD, S, E, E, SHARPEN HANDLE, LOOK AROUND, R, R, R, R, R, R, EMPTY SACK, REFLECT LIGHT, DROP GARLIC, D, LOOK AROUND, EXAM TOMB, EXAM REMAINS, GET REMAINS, ENTER TOMB, E, E, E, E.

ZORK ONE (Infocom)
THE SOLUTION CONTINUED.

Last month I began to relate the findings of Reginald Graham for Infocom's adventure, *ZORK*. You were all left flying back over the rainbow with a collection of various objects. So – let's get back to where we left off . . .

Now return to the north end of the reservoir and get the pump. Go now to the dam base and pump up the boat. Now journey to near the falls and collect the emerald out of the buoys.

Leave the deflated dinghy where you found it. Again deposit the treasure. Now bring the lamp, torch and screwdriver and go down to the mine and put the torch and screwdriver into the basket (and lower it). Now go N and D to get the bracelet, then E, NE, SE, SW, D and D, S, to get the coal. Then back through the maze (N,E,S,N) to put the coal in the baskets (and lower it). Return into the mine and go to the timber room. Drop everything and get through. Take everything and go S. Put the coal in the machine and turn it on with the screwdriver. Now you will have a diamond. Go N and put everything in the basket. Re-enter the crack and take everything and return up to the basket room and raise it. Take everything and go and get the jade model (if need be drop the plank as you don't need it). Now return home and put all the treasure in the case.
NB: The return may be made quicker by taking the mirror and making a quick turn around. Now 'leave the dam as you found it' and quickly zoom across to the loud room and collect your hefty platinum bar. Now, for the big fight of the game. Collect your sword and lamp, go W, W, U and confront the thief and lay into him, it'll take time but eventually you will, hopefully, overcome him. As well as the chalice, stiletto and any other treasures previously stolen off you, you will find a perfectly opened jewelled egg. Then go and replenish your treasure case and take the canary up to the tree top and wind it up for a little reward. Now you can finish off your collection and by typing score, you'll find where to go to end the game (SW from mailbox).

SPY TREK (AMERICANA)
SOME HINTS 'N' TIPS

Here's some help for Americana's cheapy adventure. You've got Andrew Woodgate to thank for this. He has been battling away at this one for some time. If anyone has got any further with this then do write in and the tips will be printed next month. Hopefully.

First of all you are lying in a coffin, to get out put 'Lift Lid'. When you get out input 'Exam Inside Pocket' pick up the pill and wallet, input Swallow Pill, and you will faint and end up in an old store-room, put Open Briefcase, take out wig and beard and wear them and then input Enter Hole. Go west input Push Button and then go east twice and input sit on Belt.

You find an old tramp, input Give Coin until he says something different. Pick up the Small Key and Large Umbrella go to the Bar and say "I'll have Unyon" (Onion is spelt correctly). Pick up the Packet and open it, get the Passport, and then Onion, go through to customs and input Show Passport and then Enter Plane.

Go west first, to the Stewards' Section and input Open Drawer and then take the Knife, go along to the Cockpit and input Peel Onion.

Go to the French Taxi Rank, get in the Taxi and input Tower. When you reach the Tower open the Gate, go up there three times and on the third time input Enter Balloon.

You will now find yourself in Switzerland, go up the slope collect the Spade and input Enter Car and Pull Lever, go East and put dig and pick up the Rod. That's as far as I have got. Can you do better?

ROBIN OF SHERWOOD
(Adventure International)
THE FULL SOLUTION

So, quoth he, I have a complete solution for *Robin of Sherwood* courtesy of Mr A Rushton from Ellesmere Port, South Wirral. If this doesn't help you to get your girl, then I don't know what will.

Stand on prisoners, grab the guard's leg, strangle the guard, search guard and get sword, undo bolt and open grate, go out, go through the door to courtyard, climb battlements and go through door, take the right hand door, and go through window.

Go to waterfall, say "Go Waterfall" and get weapons, go south and get Quarter-staff, fight John and you will free him. Drop staff.

Go to holly tree, go up, examine and get Touchstone, go to Outlaws' Camp say "LOOK", then go to Nottingham and enter contest.

In contest say "Fire Arrow" and win contest, when Sheriff throws down silver arrow, get it, then grab sheriff and go to main gates, release sheriff.

Go and find Friar Tuck and talk to him, then go to Castle Belleme, go through the door, then South, kill Belleme with Silver Arrow, untie Marion and Examine Belleme, get Touchstone and Silver Arrow. Go to courtyard and climb statue of Azeal, examine the eyes, and get gold.

Go and find Gregory the Taxman, grab Gregory, examine cart, examine sacks, and get gold.

Go to Leaford Grange, go South, examine Forest, go to cave, go to cellar and grab Siward the thief.

Go and find the serf and grab the horn, enter cart.

When in Nottingham courtyard say "WAIT" then leave cart, climb the battlements, go through door, go through left door, release Siword, who will open the chest, then kill Siward. Examine chest, get crest, gold, touchstone, go through door, go through right hand door, go through window.

Go to the Templern camp, give them the crest, and get the touchstone, go to Kirklees Abbey, pay the Nun the gold, and get the Touchstone.

Then finally go to the Stone Circle, drop all your Touchstones and the silver arrow to end the game.

THE VERA CRUZ AFFAIR
(Infogrames)
HALF A SOLUTION

Yes, I'm going to be mean and tricky again this month and leave you with half a solution to the *Vera Cruz Affair*. To be honest I've never played the game itself, so I hope all of you can understand the solution. These come from Bill Werner, from Invernesshire. First of all input Gun, cartridge, thread, button, diary and address, Rothmans, letter and matchbox.

Then read on . . .

DUPLAT Simone – born 21.4.51 ST-ETIENNE – caretaker for the FOREZ Residence Bergson Street ST-ETIENNE.

– – I returned home at about 11.00pm. In the hall I passed two men who ran down the stairs and got into a BMW; the first registration numbers were 9111:

– – One of the men was dark haired and had a thick moustache. I couldn't see the other one very well at all.

MARTIN Nestor – born 30.2.37 LYONS. Lives at the FOREZ Residence Bergson Street ST-ETIENNE.

– – I am the next door neighbour of Miss Cruz whom I don't know very well. On the 5.10.85 towards 10.30pm I heard banging coming from her apartment but at the moment I didn't realise that it was the sound of a gunshot.

– – I can recall.

ADDRESSEE NOT KNOWN. STOP

ADDRESSEE NOT APPLICABLE. STOP.

ADDRESSEE NOT KNOWN. STOP.

ORIG CRRJ LYONS
DEST GIE ST-ETIENNE

PISTOLET MAC 50 No G56743 STOLEN ON THE 11.1.85 FROM THE BARRACKS OF GUNSMITH 92 IR CLERMONT-FERRAND 63 WITH A BATCH OF AMMUNITION 9MM TE9F3-79 (AFF HANDLED BY GIE CLERMONT).

ORIG GIE CLERMONT
DEST GIE ST-ETIENNE

CONC. ROBBERY OF PA MAC 50 G56743 UNPRODUCTIVE ENQUIRY. A BMW CAR MARK 69 HAD BEEN SEEN ON SITE. NO FURTHER ACCURATE INFORMATION. TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE KNOWLEDGE OF THESE PLACES THE SUSPECT IS PROBABLY AN EX-SOLDIER OF THE 92 IR.

LAFEUILLE Nadine born 1.2.56 in Valence (26) residing at 2 Balay Street in ST-ETIENNE.

– – I'm a childhood friend of Vera CRUZ
– – I met her the day before her death; she said she knew too much about a nasty business and was afraid of a certain 'GYPSY'.

ORIG CRRJ LYONS
DEST GIE ST-ETIENNE

ZIEGLER PHILIBERT, CONVICTED 9.9.82 TO 2 YEARS IMPRISONMENT FOR POSSESSION OF ARMS, 4TH CATEGORIE, AND ADMITTED ASSAULT AND BATTERY (AFF HANDLED BY GIE ST-GALMIER 42) IMPRISONED NEAR ST-PAUL LYONS.

ORIG GIE ST GALMIER
DEST GIE ST-ETIENNE

8.6.82 OUR ORGANISATION ARRESTED ZIEGLER PHILIBERT WHO HAD BEATEN A CLIENT OF PROSTITUTE, EVA DELARUE, WHO WOULDN'T PAY. BECAUSE OF INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE ZIEGLER COULD NOT BE CHARGED WITH PIMPING.

ADDRESSEE NOT APPLICABLE. STOP.

ORIG CRRJ LYONS
DEST GIE ST-ETIENNE

DELARUE-EVA, NOTORIOUS PROSTITUTE, APPREHENDED MANY TIMES FOR SOLICITING ON PUBLIC STREETS. HAS NEVER GIVEN THE NAME OF HER PIMP.

DELARUE Eva – born 23.1.57 in PARIS. Unemployed – Residing 110 cours Fauriel ST-ETIENNE.

– – Vera didn't commit suicide.

– – I have heard, locally, that she knew too much about a burglary and that she had a jeweller among her customers – a Mr DELROCHE Hubert of ST-ETIENNE, and that his property was broken into recently. Draw your own conclusions from that.

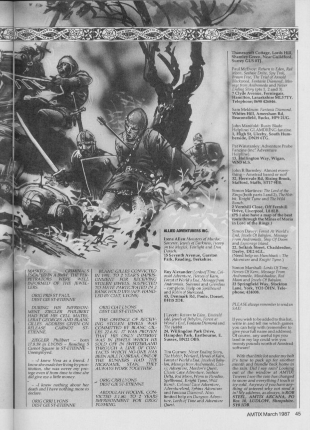
DELROCHE Hubert – born 21.4.30 in LYON – jeweller – Residing People Square in ST-ETIENNE.

– – I used to be with Miss Vera rather frequently but since the murder of my wife I've not seen her anymore.

– – Personally I was attacked on the 2nd of October 1985 by three men; one of which killed my wife who was trying to call for help. The criminals took flight. The Police Office of ST-ETIENNE takes care of this affair.

ORIG CIAT ST-ETIENNE
DEST GIE ST-ETIENNE

THE HOLD UP OF DELROCHE JEWELLERS HAS NOT BEEN SOLVED AT PRESENT. MURDERER OF MME DELROCHE ANSWERS TO THE NICKNAME PHIL. A 9mm CARTRIDGE CASE MARKED TE 9 F 3-79 WAS FOUND. THE



MASKED CRIMINALS ESCAPED IN A BMW. THE PERPETRATORS WERE WELL INFORMED OF THE JEWELLERS.

ORIG PRIS ST PAUL
DEST GIE ST-ETIENNE

DURING HIS IMPRISONMENT ZIEGLER PHILIBERT HAD FOR HIS CELL MATES, LERAT GEORGES AND BLANC GILLES. ADDRESS GIVEN ON RELEASE CARNOT ST-ETIENNE.

ZIEGLER Philibert – born 17.8.59 in LYONS – Residing 5 Carnot Square in ST-ETIENNE – Unemployed.

– –I knew Vera as a friend. I know she made her living by prostitution, she was never my protege even if from time to time she did give me a little money.

– –I knew nothing about her death and I have nothing more to declare.

ORIG CRRJ LYONS
DEST GIE ST-ETIENNE

BLANC GILLES CONVICTED IN 1981, TO 2 YEAR'S IMPRISONMENT FOR RECEIVING STOLEN JEWELS. SUSPECTED TO HAVE PARTICIPATED IN 2 BANK HOLD UPS (AFF. HANDLED BY CIAT, LYONS).

ORIG CIAT LYONS
DEST GIE ST-ETIENNE

THE OFFENCE OF RECEIVING STOLEN JEWELS WAS COMMITTED BY BLANC GILLES 22.6.81. IT WAS PROVEN THAT HIS ONLY INTEREST WAS IN JEWELS WHICH HE SOLD OFF IN SWITZERLAND THROUGH A LINE OF CONTACTS WHICH NO-ONE HAS BEEN ABLE TO BREAK. ONE OF THE RUNNERS HAD THE NICKNAME, STAN. THEY ALWAYS WORK TOGETHER.

ORIG CRRJ LYONS
DEST GIE ST-ETIENNE

ABDOULAH HOCINE, CONVICTED 3.1.80, TO 2 YEARS IMPRISONMENT FOR DRUG PUSHING.

ALLIED ADVENTURERS INC.

Irene Allen: *Monsters of Murdoc, Sorcerer, Jewels of Darkness, Heavy on the Magick, Fairlight* and *Dun Darach*.
15 Seventh Avenue, Garston Park, Reading, Berkshire.

Roy Alexander: *Lords of Time, Colossal Adventure, Heroes of Karn, Forest at World's End, Message from Andromeda, Subsunk* and *Gremlins* – complete. Help on *Spellbound* and *Robin of Sherwood*.
43, Denmark Rd, Poole, Dorset, BH15 2DE.

J Lycett: *Return to Eden, Emerald Isle, Jewels of Babylon, Forest at World's End, Fantasia Diamond* and *The Hobbit*.
24, Willingdon Park Drive, Hampden Park, Eastbourne, E. Sussex, BN22 OBS.

Tim Gurney: *Never Ending Story, The Hobbit, Warlord, Heroes of Karn, Forest at World's End, Jewels of Babylon, Message from Andromeda, Classic Adventure, Mordon's Quest, Classic Cave Adventure, Seabase Delta, Red Moon, Worm in Paradise, Spellbound, Knight Tyme, Wild Bunch, Colossal Cave Adventure, Adventureland, Sphinx Adventure* and *Fantasia Diamond*. Also limited help on *Dungeon Adventure, Lords of Time* and *Adventure Quest*.
Thanescroft Cottage, Lords Hill, Shamley Green, Near Guildford, Surrey GU5 0TJ.

Paul McEvoy: *Return to Eden, Red Moon, Seabase Delta, Spy Trek, Brawn Free, The Trial of Arnold Blackwood, Fantasia Diamond, Message from Andromeda* and *Never Ending Story* (pts 1, 2 and 3).
7 Clyde Avenue, Ferniegair, Hamilton, Lanarkshire ML3 7TY. Telephone; 0698 426846.

Sam Meldrum: *Fantasia Diamond*.
Whites Hill, Amersham Rd, Beaconsfield, Bucks, HP9 2UG.

John Manifold: Rusty Blade Helpline/ GLAMDRING fanzine.
1, High St, Ulceby, South Humberside, DN39 6TG.

Pat Winstanley: Adventure Probe Fanzine (inc. Adventure Helpline).
13, Hollington Way, Wigan, WN3 6LS.

John R Barnsley: Almost everything – Amstrad based or not!
32, Herrivale Rd, Rising Brook, Stafford, Staffs, ST17 9EB.

Simon Martinez: *The Lord of the Rings* (both parts 1 and 2), *The Hobbit, Knight Tyme* and *The Wild Bunch*.
2 Vernhill Close, Off Fernhill Drive, Liverpool, L8 8LB.
(PS I also have a map of the best route through the Mines of Moria in Lord of the Rings.)

Simon Davey: *Forest At World's End, Jewels Of Babylon, Message From Andromeda, Ship Of Doom* and *Espionage Island*.
22, Selkirk Street, Chaddesdon, Derby, DE2 6GL.
(Need help on *Hunchback – The Adventure* and *Knight Tyme*.)

Simon Marshall: *Lords Of Time, Heroes Of Karn, Message From Andromeda, Mindshadow, Red Moon* and *Jewels Of Babylon*.
23 Springfield Way, Stockton Lane, York, YO3 OHN. Telephone; 424008.

PLEASE always remember to send an SAE!

If you wish to be added to this list, write in and tell me which games you can help with (remember to give your full name and address). Of course, any useful tips you land in my lap could win you twenty pounds worth of Amstrad software!

With that little lot under my belt it's time to pack up for another month and trundle back home in the rain. Did I say rain? Looking out of the window at AMTIX! Towers I see the rain has changed to snow and everything I touch is icy cold. Anyway if you have anything of interest why not send it in? My address, as always, is ***ROB STEEL, AMTIX ARCANA, PO Box 10, LUDLOW, Shropshire. SY8 1DB.***

TOP TWENTY FOR MARCH

Here we go again, the Top 20 as decided by our own groupie AMTIX! readers. The figures in brackets are last month's positions.

YOUR VOTE COULD WIN YOU £40 OF SOFTWARE

Every month we generous types here at AMTIX! Towers will be awarding the grand sum of £40 worth of software to the lucky reader whose form is drawn from Uncle Malcolm's toupee (sorry Crumbly). In addition the next four readers, whose forms are drawn will have their very own AMTIX! T Shirts and hats to love and cherish.

This month the lucky reader who wins the £40 of software is **Richard Hobson** of Hall Green, Birmingham B28 0DF. T Shirts and caps will soon be winging their way to **David Cobane** of Wythenshawe, Manchester M22 7LW, **Richard Symons** of Bridgend, Mid Glamorgan, **Paul Waller** of Doncaster, South Yorkshire ON5 9SG, and **Justin Green** of Portsoy.

1 (6) YIE AR KUNG FU — Imagine

2 (2) GREEN BERET — Imagine

3 (1) SPIN-DIZZY — Electric Dreams

4 (17) IKARI WARRIORS — Elite

5 (1) ELITE — Firebird

6 (9) JACK THE NIPPER — Gremlin Graphics

7 (10) COMMANDO — Elite

8 (4) BATMAN — Ocean

9 (-) THRUST — Firebird

10 (18) LIGHTFORCE — FTL

11 (7) GET DEXTER — PSS/ERE

12 (-) TRIVIAL PURSUIT — Domark

13 (-) THE EIDOLON — Activision

14 (6) GHOSTS "N" GOBLINS — Elite

15 (-) DRUID — Firebird

16 (-) GAUNTLET — US Gold

17 (-) WAY OF THE TIGER — Gremlin Graphics

18 (13) WINTER GAMES — Epyx

19 (15) WAY OF THE EXPLODING FIST — Melbourne House

20 (-) SCOOBY DOO — Elite

TOP TWENTY TWITTERS

Once again a very big THANKS to all of you AMTIX! groupies who voted again this month, we don't mind if you don't agree with our joystick junkies. That's what democracy is all about – people arguing, disagreeing and fighting amongst themselves all the time! Keep your forms rolling in, that's very important if the chart is to be truly representative.

It did not take long for that old favourite *Yie Ar Kung Fu* to take over the number one spot again, replacing *Elite* from **Firebird**.

There are five new entries this month, including no less than three of our Accolades, *Scooby Doo* from **Elite**, *Gauntlet* from **US Gold**, and *The Eidolon* from **Activision**. There are also two re-entries, *Way of the Tiger* from **Gremlin Graphics**, and *Thrust* from **Firebird**.

Remember it's most important to fill in your scores, if you want a mention in the new regular Saffron's Scoreboard feature. Do fill in all the form, we noticed some people have been skipping bits, now that's very naughty, so fill in all of it, y'hear or Saffron will sort you out with her brollie. You have been warned!

Banffshire AB4 SPP.

Well done you lot and could you all write to Auntie Julie Yaxley, our competitions secretary, at AMTIX! Towers, 1/2 King Street, LUDLOW, Shropshire SY8 1AQ stating your chest sizes for the T-Shirts as soon as possible please? In this issue we are publishing a new form for you to complete. Please ensure you fill it all in.

Remember, voting is simplicity itself and will only cost you the price of a stamp. Just fill in the form, all of it, and list your five favourite games in descending order with the best at number one. If you don't want to cut up your precious copy of AMTIX! write all the details onto a postcard or the back of an envelope, or you can always photocopy the form. Whatever you do, do it right! Please!

AMTIX! READERS TOP TWENTY CHART VOTING FORM

Please write in CAPS in an eyestrain free manner for Crumbly's benefit.

Name ....

Address ....

....

....

Postcode ....

The World's five hippest games in order of preference are:
TITLE

1 ....
2 ....
3 ....
4 ....
5 ....

From one of the five games above select one and give us your high score:

TITLE ....

SCORE ....

My machine is a 464/664/6128/8256 (delete as applicable)

If I am lucky enough to win the top prize of £40 of software vouchers the games I would like are as follows. I would like the cassette/disk version (please delete as applicable).

THE GAMES I WOULD LIKE ARE: ....

....

....

....

If I am lucky enough to win a T Shirt my chest size is SMALL, MEDIUM, LARGE (circle the appropriate size)

Send your coupon to:

AMTIX! TOP TWENTY, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB

SAFFRON'S SCOREBOARD

If Iruled the world, everyday would be the first day of Spring . . . so there wouldn't be any of this ruddy snow! Warm yourself up with a joystick and a bit of friction as your hand pulsates towards those high scores; and then post 'em off to my goodself at: SAFFRON'S SCOREBOARD, AMTIX!, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE. SY8 1DB. See ya next month.

BATMAN (Ocean)
9,102 Robert Lane, Mansfield
8,264, Luigi Antonioni, London

CAULDRON II (Palace)
Completed by Richard Hewitt, Stoke on Trent
Completed by Gordon Macdonald, Chichester
9,700, Mark Cleland, Motherwell

COMMANDO (Elite)
192,290, Matthew Ross, Wokingham
128,080, Michael Stirling, West Ferry

DAN DARE (Virgin Games)
Completed (And shot Mekon!) Mass Valducci, AMTIX! Towers
Completed, Neil Graham, London
294,380, Daniel Webster, Buckingham

EIDOLON
338,204, Churchdown, Glos.

ELITE (Firebird)
655,359,999 Credits, Tony Clarke, AMTIX! Towers
49,692,192 Credits, Andrew Mpouzer
49,144,900 Credits, Ewan Mains, Hamilton

FIFTH AXIS (Loriciels)
99%, Shane Gilmartin, Malahide
86%, Saffron Trevaskis, AMTIX! Towers

GAUNTLET (US Gold)
271,164, Julian Rignall, Ludlow
102,988 Tony Clarke, AMTIX! Towers, Ludlow

GET DEXTER (PSS/ERE)
304,100, Mark Cleland, Motherwell
248,500, Luigi Antonioni, London
146,000, Gary the Gnome, Dalton-in-Furness

GHOSTS AND GOBLINS (Elite)
368,400, A Herdman
271,750, Mark Carter, Willenhall
268,480, Paul Jolleys, Wigan

GREEN BERET (Imagine)
1,164,680, Paul Jolleys, Wigan
351,900, Sunhil Hirani, Acton
164,580, David Edwards, Stockton-On-Tees

HARVEY HEADBANGER (Firebird)
99 - 0, John Lloyd, Market Harbrough

IKARI WARRIORS (Elite)
10,995,500, Mark Chapell, Northorpe
2,258,900, Michael Mann, Digmoor
2,245,300, Jonathon Powell, Hereford

JACK THE NIPPER (Gremlin Graphics)
66%, Simon Machell, Wallasey

KNIGHT GAMES (English Software)
50,000, John Bird, Fakenham

KNIGHT TYME (Mastertronic)
100%, Richard Hewitt, Stoke on Trent
100%, Daniel Webster, Buckingham

KUNG FU MASTER (US Gold)
356,300, Jason Atkinson, Chorley
166,900, Sarfraz Afzal, Doonfoot
142,300, Jonathon Agha, South Norwood

LIGHTFORCE (FTL)
327,500, Mark Chapell, Northorpe
33,350, Daniel Webster, Buckingham
8,650, Robert Lane, Mansfield

MATCHDAY (Ocean)
70-2, Adrian Vassallo, Malta

SORCERY (Amsoft)
100% Completed, Tony Clarke, AMTIX! Towers, Ludlow
133,095, Bryan Hart, Chalgrove
106,447, David Rowland, Kilmarnock

SPACE HARRIER
5,904,536, Brian Keys, Co Fermanagh

SPY vs SPY (Beyond)
Completed, Mark Wilson, Rochester

SPINDIZZY (Electric Dreams)
106 Jewels, Andre Page, Bristol
396,950, Maurice Bowness, Merseyside
243,248, Antony Power, Bognor Regis

STARQUAKE (Bubble Bus)
98%, Robert Moore, Cumbria 92%, Luigi Antonioni
90%, D Deeley, Warwick

STARSTRIKE TWO (Realtime)
1,198,600, Paul Selvidge, Chatham
1,450,000, Gary Marshall, Swanwick
1,409,600, Paul Jolleys, Wigan

THRUST (Firebird)
86,550, Craig Thompson, Motherwell
58,600, Sunhil Hirani, Acton
31,750, Anthony Bashier-Jones, Gwent

TEMPEST (Electric Dreams)
76,797, Daniel Webster, Buckingham
49,129, Neil Faulkner, Watford

WHO DARES WINS II (Alligata)
998,560, Sohail Akram, Rochdale
579,700, Mark Lloyd, Co Kildare
545,660, Jije Apted, Wembley

YIE AR KUNG FU (Imagine)
62,520,630, Luigi Antonioni, London
10,700,600, Mark Richard Long, Witham
7,152,350, Jije Apted, Wembley

Saffron Trevaskis

THE RAINBIRD FILE

RICHARD EDDY decides it's about time he spread his wings and flapped off to Wellington House in search of the elusive Rainbird team.

Just over eighteen months ago, **Rainbird** was nothing more than a twinkle in the eye of Tony Rainbird, who was then involved with the **Firebird** Silver Range. Since then things have grown considerably, and now **Rainbird** have earned a reputation as the top producer of quality software.

It's some time now since **Rainbird**'s first product, *The Music Studio*, was launched – it set a high standard of product, packaging and presentation that has become a recognised **Rainbird** trademark. The company (a division of **Telecomsoft**, based in Wellington House) has since widened its horizons – having progressed from producing hardened utilities, they're now aiming to corner the top end of the arcade and adventure markets.

With products such as *The Pawn*, *Starglider* and *Silicon Dreams*, they've already captured the imagination of the Amstrad market.

Rainbird's future looks pretty rosy at the moment, with games such as *Tracker* soon to be released for the Amstrad. The follow-up to *Starglider* (one of last month's Accolades) is also currently under development. It hasn't been assigned a name yet, but the imaginative working title is (wait for it) *Starglider II* – inspirational eh? Although the project is shrouded in mystery, **Rainbird** promise a game with all the excitement of its predecessor – and a little bit extra!

Further releases are being kept a bit hush-hush, but there are definitely going to be three new products for the Amstrad. Whispers tell of arcade simulations – at least one of which is being produced with **Realtime**'s help. Is this the aforementioned *Starglider II* one wonders? Other news on the grapevine is that there's one very special game which apparently doesn't fall into any specific category and, according to the development team, is going to knock the software industry for six. We shall wait with bated breath.

On the adventure front, *Guild Of Thieves* (**Magnetic Scrolls**' follow up to *The Pawn*) is coming along. Although I haven't seen anything of the game itself, the graphics that I saw – currently under development on the Atari ST – are masterpieces in their own right. Then there's also a **Level 9** game, *Knight Orc*, in the pipeline.

Rainbird certainly have a busy year ahead of them, but just who and what makes them tick? Let's have a look at the team.

PAULA AND PAUL - A VIEW FROM THE TOP



PAULA BYRNE
Publisher

PAUL HIBBARD
Deputy Publisher

Paula Byrne started out in the Software Industry with **Melbourne House**, and joined **Rainbird** as Marketing Manager in April last year. She became the 'big cheese' when Tony Rainbird (the founder who loaned his name to the company) resigned in November. Paula now manages **Rainbird** along with Paul – her deputy.

Paul came to **Rainbird** from sister company **Firebird** after having worked on *Rasputin*. He was originally recruited to deal with development, but now he's the overseer for the production department. However, Paul still has a great deal to do with development, whereas Paula is more involved with the marketing.

Although Paula is overall publisher, Paul usually manages the production aspects of the business. Paula's primary concern is recruiting new programmers, organising their contracts and dealing with **Rainbird** as a whole.



CLARE EDGELEY
Public Relations Manager

Clare's association with the computer games world goes back to the days when she was a Staff Writer for **Sinclair User**. She joined **Rainbird** last summer, and although she has the title of PR Manager, she claims that half the time she's not so sure what she is doing. "My job is very bitty. Basically, I work for Paula as she is on the marketing side. She'll handle the final product – part of my job is to make sure everyone knows about the product before it's released. This can prove pretty difficult if we've got eight games coming out in a month – very hectic. I like to think of myself as my own minion."

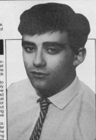
She's the one who gives us the news about **Rainbird** games, and she also processes all the **Rainbird** competitions that appear in the magazine. The question is, does she actually play the games, and more to the point – does she enjoy them? "I try very hard to, and now I'm actually very good at *Starglider*, but not so hot at *Tracker*. I do enjoy them – well, I've been playing with a Spectrum for a good two years and now I've got access to a wide range machines I have a really good time. However, I'm not very good at giving demonstrations; I usually leave that to a colleague. I prefer playing them for myself. I couldn't do the job unless I did."

Clare has some very positive views on **Rainbird**'s future. "We've already captured the top end of the market – eventually I'd like to see us as top adventure, arcade and utility publisher, and I think we're definitely getting there".

GETTING THE GAMES . . .

Rainbird employs several people to deal with the development of new products – checking up on programming and finally testing the games to make sure that they're worthwhile. Who are these people who mould the shape of the games that you might be playing one day?

RICARDO PINTO
Development Manager



Ricardo's another fledgling from **Firebird**, and his pedigree is quite impressive. He was previously manager of **Torus**, the programming team which brought you *Gyron*, and the all time classic *Elite*. At **Rainbird** he takes care of the games up until the point when they are put in their boxes, keeping in close contact with the programmers. He's the guiding man – making sure that there are no products coming out that are below **Rainbird**'s normal standard. He also evaluates the products which **Rainbird** are likely to bring out, giving them a thorough 'going over' before there is any work done on production.

So where do people that hope to join that elite bunch of **Rainbird** programmers come from? "A few people come to us – not very many because the kind of thing we require is very technically demanding. There are very few amateurs who have either the time or money to produce programs that would meet our standards. We do quite a bit of head-hunting, and we find that a lot of the professional programming teams come to us – the reason being that we don't mess about. What I do is make sure that they're kept happy – and provide a back up of services."

Intrigued by the idea of this mad Puerto Rican hunting down programmers armed only with a book of blank cheques, I enquired how the **Realtime** boys came to do the Amstrad *Starglider*. "Well, they had good technical 'know how', and an excellent reputation for producing software, not only efficiently, but most importantly – on time. After seeing *Starstrike I and II* we knew we just had to have them on the *Starglider* project".

Ricardo is heavily involved with graphics. Some of his best work includes the *Starglider* loading screen and the *Art Studio* demos of the tiger and abstract faces. He's currently playing with the *Advanced Art Studio*, which features some new functions which he's looking forward to experimenting with.

GARY SHEINWALD
Development Assistant

Gary is known around Wellington House as 'The Wizard' (for some peculiar reason which has been lost in the mists of time). At the tender age of twenty, he's attained the exalted title of Development Assistant. His job entails developing games and utilities, and providing documentation for them before they're passed on to the production department for mastering.

Essentially Gary tests the software; checking for bugs – or 'Non playable features' as they're known in **Rainbird**-speak.

Gary was involved quite heavily with **Rainbird**'s *Starglider* project, mainly in the area of design, "What there is of it", he jokes. As well as guiding the game through development, Gary was responsible for writing and editing the documentation that accompanied the package.

The job of writing the *Starglider* manual was done over a period of two months, "It was a real pain because James Follet's novella was set in the future and stated that the would-be heroes found a 200 year old flight manual. This meant I had to write the flight manual as if it was actually found two centuries before the setting of the game.

It's at this point that it gets really complicated because the craft was then re-designed so the flight manual doesn't give the full instructions away – it acts more like a clue book."

Manuals, instructions and the like aren't always written after the program – with *Starglider* the playing guides were written in parallel with the game, and Gary claims that they were actually completed a mere ten minutes before the game was went off to be mastered! "I had so many good ideas but time was pressing – there was a lot more I wanted to do. Next time I'd like to get the manuals organised first and then leave the rest to the programmers". Gary's other contribution to *Starglider* was the Game Over graphics which were unfortunately scrapped; "Story of my life that . . ."





THE RAINBIRD FILE

HACKING AND SLAYING

Rainbird have recently signed up two of Britain's leading adventure producers; **Level 9** and **Magnetic Scrolls**. So far they've already produced *Jewels Of Darkness*, *Silicon Dreams* and *The Pawn* – and it's not going to end there. Mike Austin of **Level 9** reveals all.

MIKE AUSTIN
Level 9

Mike has been with his family's company, **Level 9**, ever since its inception – some time in 1981. The Austins are currently working on all the home micros, as well as some of the 16 bit machines like the ST, Amiga and IBM PC. "The advantage with the 16 bitters", explains Mike, "is that we can go for more advanced adventures with digitised graphics and the like. Eventually we hope to get these advanced adventures down on the eight bit home micros but they'll probably be disk orientated."

The next **Rainbird/Level 9** game to be launched on the Amstrad will be *Knight Orc*, which involves the player in a a great deal of interaction with other characters in the adventure. "They're totally independent. They move and carry out their own actions while you move about. In the later parts of the game the player may have to befriend some of them and get them to obey commands to get further into the game".

I asked Mike what structure *Knight Orc* will take: "It's a three part adventure – but slightly different to other **Level 9** programs. The first part is an introductory stage – that's totally independent. When a player gets into the second and third parts of the game it's not possible to walk back into the first. Parts Two and Three are essentially two views of the same world – a magical one and a technical one. In each mode different actions can be carried out – basically the problem is working out which actions to perform in which mode". *Knight Orc* is nearly completed on the 16 bit machines and should be gracing our screens within a few months. Sounds good.

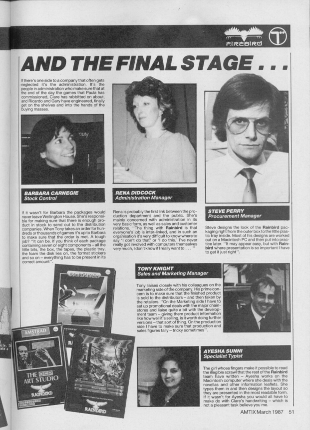
ANITA SINCLAIR
Magnetic Scrolls

Magnetic Scrolls was formed as a group in 1984. At that time the team consisted of four people: Anita and Ken Gordon, who were joint Managing Directors, Hugh Steers, who designed the **Magnetic Scrolls** parser routine, and Rob Staggie who wrote the scenario. Although Anita and Ken were both Managing Directors they were still heavily involved with the actual construction of the product. While Ken used to devise the adventure routines Anita would continually test the program for bugs (Non playable features) and "design the twiddly bits". Since **Magnetic Scrolls'** conception they've only produced one game: *The Pawn*. I asked Anita how she viewed their first project: "It's very strange. We didn't originally think *The Pawn* would appeal to many people at all – but it has proved successful. With our next release through **Rainbird**, *Guild Of Thieves*, we're aiming at a much more straight forward market. I mean, you won't have to be an avid adventurer to enjoy this product. It'll contain some element that everyone can get something from. At least that is the plan".

The Pawn won a lot of acclaim for its outstanding graphics. They were originally designed by Geoff Quilley, who is presently finalising the graphics for *Guild Of Thieves*, on a Atari ST and later converted for other machines. Are **Magnetic Scrolls** going to continue with their high quality of graphics? "Oh yes, and we're going to go on using graphics drawn freehand – I don't think I've really taken to the digitised ones. However, we are planning to write some adventures that will be entirely text based – but that's for another day".

With so much competition in the adventure market do they consider **Infocom** as their biggest rival? "Yes, I think they are – but I'd hate to topple them. What could I play if they were finished?" Where there's competition there's always rivalry – or so the saying goes; does Anita regard this as the situation between her company and **Infocom**? "Oh no. We're not rivals in that sense of the word at all. In fact when we get stuck with a problem they're always very helpful. They're a great bunch and very useful in an emergency!"





AND THE FINAL STAGE . . .

If there's one side to a company that often gets neglected it's the administration. It's the people in administration who make sure that at the end of the day the games that Paula has commissioned, Clare has rabbitted on about, and Ricardo and Gary have engineered, finally get on the shelves and into the hands of the buying masses.

BARBARA CARNEGIE
Stock Control

If it wasn't for Barbara the packages would never leave Wellington House. She's responsible for making sure that there is enough product in stock to send out to the distribution companies. When Tony takes an order for hundreds or thousands of games it's up to Barbara to make sure that the order is met. A tough job? "It can be. If you think of each package containing seven or eight components – all the little bits, the box, the tapes, the plastic tray, the foam the disk lies on, the format stickers and so on – everything has to be present in its correct amount".

RENA DIDCOCK
Administration Manager

Rena is probably the first link between the production department and the public. She's mainly concerned with administration in its very basic form, as well as sales and customer relations. "The thing with **Rainbird** is that everyone's job is inter-linked, and in such an organisation it's very difficult to know where to say 'I don't do that' or 'I do this.' I've never really got involved with computers themselves very much, I don't know if I really want to . . . "

STEVE PERRY
Procurement Manager

Steve designs the look of the **Rainbird** packaging right from the outer box to the little plastic tray inside. Most of his designs are worked out on a Macintosh PC and then put into practice later. "It may appear easy, but with **Rainbird** where presentation is so important I have to get it just right".

TONY KNIGHT
Sales and Marketing Manager

Tony liaises closely with his colleagues on the marketing side of the company. His prime concern is to make sure that the finished product is sold to the distributors – and then taken by the retailers. "On the Marketing side I have to set up promotional deals with the major chainstores and liaise quite a bit with the development team – giving them product information like how well it's selling, is it worth doing further versions – that sort of thing. On the production side I have to make sure that production and sales figures tally – tricky sometimes".

AYESHA SUNNI
Specialist Typist

The girl whose fingers make it possible to read the illegible scrawl that the rest of the **Rainbird** team have written – Ayesha works on the Macintosh computer where she deals with the novellas and other information leaflets. She types them in and then designs the layout so they are presented in the most readable form. If it wasn't for Ayesha you would all have to make do with Clare's handwriting – which is not a pleasant task believe you me.



Winners + Prizes

Sorting out all the winners from the the mammoth Christmas issue hasn't been an easy task, especially as AMTIX! Towers is covered with a white, winter blanket of snow at the time of writing. The burbling old plumbing systems of both the Towers and its residents are moaning loudly. Malcolm has already burst a pipe in his head by falling over at the Amstrad Show whilst climbing into the bath. Our semi-conscious Crumbly was rushed to hospital to receive a little needlework on his nut. Three stiches later, Malcolm's back at his computer with only the disposition of a bear with a sore head as testament to his ordeal. Anyway, I digress (although I am sure he would like some get well cards). What you really want is the massive list of winners from the mega issue so without further ado, here are the lucky readers.

LATERAL THINKING COMPETITION

This competition must have caused a lot of headaches over the Christmas period. As with most lateral thinking contests it was relatively easy, providing you have a devious mind. There were 10 prizes of the complete AMTIX! outfit, a sweatshirt, T Shirt, Cap, and a binder. The lucky 10 are:

Mr C A Mee, Prince of Wales Avenue, SO1 4L2; Mr R G Girvan, Gillott Road, B16 0RP; Andrew Wong, Holmlands Drive, L43 OUT; Nicholas Purser, Cornwall Road, HG1 2NG; Guy Collins, Dawes Close, WS15 4BE; Alistair Knowles, Wykewane, WR14 2XD; Lewis Slater, Southwold Mans, W9 2LF; Michael Clark, Dean Park, EH22 4LZ; Chris Peach, Poplar Way, BH24 1UY; Robert Padley, Oak Walk, CT21 5DN.

The 10 runners up, who each receive a T.Shirt, are:

Keith Todd, Stuart Road, L22 4QS; Simon Ralfs, Forgandenny, PH2 9ET; L Hubbard, Windmill Road, ME8 7XA; Paul Hampton, The Gower, TW20 8UB; K E Rippon, Clifton Lane, PR4 0YD; Richard Stait, Hollybank Road, GU22 0JN; Paul Eddleston, Nelson Close, TN16 3LS; Martin Tipton, Church Lane, LE9 8DG; Simon Machell, Hampstead Road, L44 9BL; B S Bruce, Lower Mortimer Road, SO2 7HF.

Ten more runners up each receive an AMTIX! cap: namely:

Ciaran Caulfield, Seafield Lawns, Eire; Miss R Hart, Fulmer Close, TW12 3YP; Oliver Nichol, Chaucer Street, NN2 7HN; Matthew Howard-Jones, Woodlands, RH10 3DL; Gawain Barton, Camellia Close, CF44 8YE; Richard Fairbrother, Carnforth Close, NG9 3EZ; Joe Florek, Stanley Villas, WA7 4NW; Mr M Keryk, Philip Street, BB3 2DJ; Peter Meathrel, Fulmead Road, RG3 1JX; Neil Sharp, Onchan, Isle of Man.

THE MERRY JIGSAW COMP

All you had to do in this competition was re-assemble a design for a Christmas card. The lucky winner, **Julian T Roberts** of Meadow Crescent, HR1 3PA, receives a Phillips Midi Compact Disc Hi Fi System. The runner up, **Shirley Newman**, of Tullydraw Road, BT70 1RE, receives a Sharp Ghetto Blaster. Third place winner, **John Wilson**, of Carsemeadow, PA11 3SX, receives his choice of five Gremlin Graphics games.

The 20 runners up each receive their choice of game:

Gary Stothard, Ascot Avenue, DN4 6HF; Laurence Tozer, Maes-Yr-Haf, SA7 9ST; Robin Makinson, Eskdale Close, S18 5PQ; Geoff Balding, Cadogan Road, IP33 3QJ; Ian Cairns, Danes Drive, G14 9HY; Richard Torres, Thackeray Avenue, N17 9DT; Andrew Holland, Southwell Road East, NG21 0EW; Steven Allan, Bughtlin Place, EH12 8UY; Nima Tayebi, Redington Road, NW3 7RS; Michael Tout, Lockaway Road, PO4 8JN; James Skipper, Kesteven Close, PE6 8JW; David Harbige, Fir Lane, OL2 6TY; Mr M Laing, Cornhill Terrace, AB2 5YP; H W F Breach, Romans Road, SO23 9QR; Victoria Rawlinson, Cromes Place, NR16 5JT; Mark Devaney, The Cuillins, G71 6EY; Paul Martin, New Beacon Road, NG3 19JX; John Savory, Walgrave Close, NN3 4SJ; Howard Dunn, Westmead Road, DE13 8JP; Stan Fowell, Woodward Road, RM9 4SH.

I WANNA BE THREE COMPETITION

In this **Hewsons** competition you had to suggest inducements from members of the AMTIX! team to compe minion. The lucky winner, Peter White, Church Court, S31 7FR, receives a Sony Walkman and a copy of the game *Firelord*.

Five second prizes of *Firelord* and a cassette rack go to:

Gavin Hepburn, Golf Road, Aberdeenshire; Karl Vibert, Newton Road, SO21 1PE; Patrick Jackson, Northumberland Gardens, NE2 1HA; A F Brants, Monkton Combe School, BA2 3HG; Adam Wheelwright, The Grove, HX3 8JN.

A further 25 runners up each receive a copy of the game and a poster:

Martin Vessey, Riley Drive, OX16 7BY; Ben Yo, King Edwards Grove, TW11 9LY; Richard Minshaw, Belvedere Road, CV5 6PF; M Feathers, Sanstone Road, W53 3SD; Stephen Brown, The Glebe, AB5 9NW; Andrew Fox, Thornthwaite Road, LA23 2DN; D A Bullock, Charlwood Road, LU4 0BU; John Shollcar, Coronation Road, GL52 3DA; Simon Gibbs, Green Lane, S18 6LN; Chris Beltrami, Henryson Road, SE4 1HL; Nicholas Purser, Cornwall Road, HG1 2NG; Vance Chung, Finlay Rise, G62 6EQ; Scott Logan, Carlisle Road, ML11 9RA; Mark Putterill, Melford Close, S75 6EF; Julian Cater, St Leonards Road, SW14 7LY; David Hartley, Church Avenue, HG1 4HE; Haran Jiva, Coombe Lane, SW20; G J Bostock, Westmorland Road, M31 1HN; T S Hanitzsch, Chockleys Drive, TF1 4TS; Robert Hallett, Hollyfield Close, HP23 5PL; Stephen Eddleston, Nelson Close, TN16 3LS; Ian Berriman, Birch Drive, HU10 6LB; Richard Spence, Tullymore Road, BT26 6QE; Nei Witney, Grand Avenue, KT5 9HY; Gareth Jones, Golden Hill, CT5 1PR.

STOP CRUMBLY PRATTING ABOUT

What a horrid lot you are! Some of the designs to cripple Crumbly were awful (at least Crumbly says they were!) The winner receives an **Ariolasoft** bag stuffed with goodies. He is:

Paul Jolleys, Swan Lane, WN2 4HD.

The 25 runners up each receive a T-Shirt and they are:

Andrew Johnson, Bishopsthorpe Road, SE26 4NY; Peter Day, Drummond Road, B9 5XJ; Anne V R Henderson, Saint Margaret's Square, CB1 4AP; Jimmy Davies, Chelmer Road, CM8 2EY; Nicholas Salter, Lakes Lane, MK16 8HR; Mark Dutton, Stumpacre, PE3 8HS; H Siva, Coombe Lane, SW20; A Wheelwright, The Grove, HX3 8JN; Richard Higson, Victoria Road, FY5 3BQ; Vance Chung, Finlay Rise, G62 6EQ; L J Fumagalli, Sandhills, LS14 3DN; Stephen Jeffs, Tylers Way, GL15 4SN; Liam Daley, Birch Avenue, PR1 0LP; Kenneth Bamford, Petersmiths Drive, NG22 9SG; Steven Flood, Hill Way, BH24 2HZ; Daniel Wilson, West View, ST3 7PH; D J Constant, Preston Avenue, NP9 4JE; Mark Warriner, Whit Avenue, YO18 7HY; C Flavin, Shirland Road, W9 2EL; Martin Fox, Summerhill Drive, BT17 0RE; Simon Jennings, Buckingham Close, LE10 1TU; Philip Goode, Davenham Close, WR14 2TY; Lee Smith, Hollyhock Road, B27 7SX; Chris Barton, Oxford Street, CT3 2DB; Stephen Ho, Norleane Crescent, L1A7 5ET.

STRIKE FORCE AMTIX!

This gave you the chance to challenge members of the AMTIX! team to a shoot out on Combat Zone and it was very popular. The three winners and their friends are to spend a day out, courtesy of **Piranha**. They are:

William J Fox, Lynhomes Road, DE4 3DW; Adrian Dalton, The Cherwell, NN11 4QL; Andrew Oxley, Weardale Crescent, TS23 1BB.

A copy of the game, *Rogue Trooper*, also goes to the following thirty people:

Kingsley Singleton, The Grove, Kent; Davison Bullock, Charlwood Road, LU4 0BU; Kerem Avcil, Compton Road, N21 3NX; Alan Miles, Ash Grove, Middlesex; Simon Watson, Trevarth, Cornwall; Phil Irish, Ragleth Gardens, SY2 5RB; David Heath, Kensworth Close, ST5 3LH; Rhett Middleton, Talsarn, SA48 8QW; Stephen Eddleston, Nelson Close, TN16 3LS; Kevin Fenton, The Avenue, ST4 6BT; S Lucas, Ruskin Way, L36 5UL; Jonathon Frost, Townley Way, NN6 0HR; D Newnham, Aspen Close, BR8 7UB; Craig Goodwin, Pentland View, EH10 6PS; Richard Nicholson, Yarmouth Road, NR12 9RL; Nathan Havell, Belchamp Road, CO9 4JT; I Mingham, Trezaise Close, Cornwall; Sam Meldrum, Amersham Road, HP9 2UG; Lee Close, Congleton Avenue, M14 7BX; David Harbige, Fir Lane, OL2 6TY; Nicholas Purser, Cornwall Road, HG1 2NG; Colin Henderson, Glamis By Forfar, DD8 1RS; Gordon Thompson, Shiel Place, ML5 4RL; Scott Logan, Carlisle Road, ML11 9RA; Damon Chichester, Tyn-Y-Parc Road, CF4 4BJ; Ian Rawlinson, Moree Way, N18 2UL; Simon Kelleher, Topcliffe Drive, TS5 8HZ; Tony Mills, Brunswick Court, L41 GLW; Richard Spence, Tullymore Road, BT26 6QE; Robert Hallett, Hollyfield Close, HP23 5PL.

DESIGNER MINION

All you had to do here was design some decent clothes for me. The winner receives a DMP 2000 printer and an Amstrad Disk Drive, plus a **Konix** joystick.

James Harris, Silverside Drive, SS0 9XE.

The 20 runners up each receive a **Konix** *Speedking* joystick. They are:

Paul Robson, Park Lane, TS1 3LQ; Richard Nicholson, Yarmouth Road, NR12 9RL; Lee Smith, Hollyhock Road, B27 7SX; Stephen Brown, The Glebe, AB5 9NW; Andrew Wong, Holmlands Drive, L43 0UT; Paul Raffo, Crowland Road, S5 7UD; Nick Harper, Adlington Road, SK9 2BN; Lakhbir Singh Kang, Holliday Road, B21 0UH; Andrew Tang, Findon Road, BN14 0EJ; Ben Lower, Flimwell, TN5 7QB; Lee Close, Congleton Avenue, M14 7BX; Gary Caveney, Coniston Road, Kent; Roy Lewis (Jnr), Harbour Lane, PR4 1XN; Jonathon Davies, Claremont Road, BS7 8DH; Theo Garfunkel, Heath Hurst Road, NW3 2RU; Ben Fletcher, King Edwards Grove, TW17 9LY; Brian Nicholas, Nether Court, CO9 2HE; Kenneth Bamford, Petersmiths Drive, NG22 9SG; Richard Schofield, Granby Crescent, DN2 6AN; Aaron Byers, Park View, KA2 4PZ.

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

Christmas cards poured in fast and furious for this competition to win a BMX bike and the eventual winner was Leo Medawer, Heath Hurst Road, NW3 2RU.

The 30 runners up each receive a copy of the game *Space Harrier*. They are:

Mr G Newman, Tullydraw Road, BT70 1RE; Mark Richard Long, Blunts Hall Road, CM8 1ER; Richard Spence, Tullymore Road, BT26 6QE; Nathan Havell, Belchamp Road, CO9 4JT; Graeme Rogan, Kilburn Close, RG3 7DH; John Conway, Glenesk Drive, G53 7QN; Tony Vassiliou, Priory Gardens, HA0 2QG; Michael Man, Beamcroft, NW8 9HG; Brian Shallcross, Hulton Avenue, M28 6HJ; David Blyth, Kevington Drive, NR32 3JL; Andrew Szalajko, Wright Avenue, PE2 8TR; James Cusden, Elford Crescent, PL7 4BT; Junaid Kazmi, Pottery Close, LU3 3SY; David Byrne, Ambleside Close, CW2 8RX, ; Ian Collins, Dawes Close, WS15 4BE; T S Hanitzsch, Chockleys Drive, TF1 4TS; I Mingnam, Trezaise Close, Cornwall; Robert Callister, Port St Mary, Isle of Man; Scott Fuller, Belmont Avenue, FY6 7RW; F Griadkowski, Birdbrook Road, B44 8RE; Kenny Fraser, Newburgh, Fife; Dean Buckland, Banwell Street, NN16 0JD; Mark Sullivan, Durndale Lane, DA11 8PE; Paul Raffo, Crowland Road, S5 7UD; Andrew Holland, Southwell Road East, NG21 0EW; Richard Roberts, Perry Drive, SG8 7HR; Master Kevin Richards, Grove Lane, B66 2SL; Marco Ciglia, Kathleen Road, SW11 2JR; Lakhbir Singh Kang, Holliday Road, B21 0UH; Jon Clark, Pittenweem Road, KY10 3DS.



KATMAN COMPETITION

All you needed here was an inventive mind so you could think of some original names for the Kat Men. The 10 winners, who each receive a cuddly Flipbot, are:

Richard Nicholson, Yarmouth Road, NR12 9RL; L Slater, Southwold Man's, W9 2LF; Brian Nicholas, Nether Court, CO9 2HE; David Stubbings, Culver Way, PO36 8Q6; David Thompson, Glebelands Road, M33 5GR; Colin Henderson, Glamis by Forfar, DD8 1RS; Ketan Bhogaita, Freeman Road North, LE5 4NB; Robert Callister, Port St Mary, Isle of Man; David Hartley, Church Avenue, HG1 4HE; Michael Senior, Ulpho, LA20 6DZ.

DESIGN A CASTLE

This was a competition for arty people – you had to design a Colditz style castle. The three lucky winners and their guests will enjoy a day on the army assault course at Aldershot. They are:

Christopher Taylor, Hilda Park, DH2 2JP; Brian Nicholas, Nether Court, CO9 2HE; Gary A Marshall, Derby Road, DE55 1BG.

The 10 runners up each receive a copy of the game, *Into the Eagles Nest*. They are:

David Hartley, Church Avenue, HG1 4HE; Chris Barton, Whitstable C J School, CT1 1DB; Paul W J Martin, Marshall Road, B68 9ED; William Maycock, Ravencroft Road, B92 8AH; Simon Chappell, Ferndale Walk, S64 8LJ; Robert Shepherd, Trusthorpe Road, LN12 2LT; Craig Goodwin, Pentland View, EH10 6PS; Andrew Szalajko, Wright Avenue, PE2 8TR; Francis Arkhurst, Milton, N6 5QD; Oliver Scott, Brackley, KT13 0BL.

CRUMBLY'S CHRISTMAS GIFT

There are some inventive readers out there. Some of the suggestions for Christmas presents for Crumbly were interesting, to say the least. Each of the three winners will receive the **Ocean** bag with all the goodies inside.

The lucky trio are:

Large winner:- C W R Baldwin, Rugeley Road, Staffs; Medium Winner:- Piers Foot, Melton Road, NG12 5BG; Small Winner:- Richard Wilkinson, Society Road, EH30 9RX.

PARISIAN WALKWAYS

All you needed to do in this competition was compile a three day diary of places you would visit if you won this holiday in Paris. The lucky winner, who receives a week-end for two in Paris, is **Rachel Gristock**, Pickets Mead Road, SA3 4SA.

All entrants receive a £3.00 voucher redeemable against any **Infogrames** game.

HIGH INCENTIVE

The winner of this incredible competition will be given the choice of either a Hot or Cold Holiday for two worth £600! Readers had to figure out what was showing on television from a number of clues. The answer, of course, was the NEWS.

The winner is Mark Watkins, of Amersham HP7 9BB.

Ten runners up each receive their choice of game from **Incentive** and they are:

A Wynne, Tabley Close, L43 2LB; John Bass, The Stackyard, PE2 0DU; J K Brown, Barry Road, CF6 7BA; Ian Collins, Dawes Close, WS15 4BE; Mark Jones, Fen Road, PE23 4DB; Michael Nicholson, Tyne Terrace, SR8 3JY; Gary Thorne, Brownlow Drive, NG5 5AA; Andrew Webster, Mount Pleasant, NG12 5EG; Shane Morley, Healdswood Street, NG17 3FR; Steve Peckett, Beeford, YO25 8BG.

DEEP STRIKE COMPETITION

The lucky winner of this **Durell** competition receives a radio-controlled aeroplane. He is:

Gordon Ross, St Helens Avenue, OX9 6RU.

There are 50 copies of *Deep Strike* for the runners up:

M J Bedwell, Humber Doucy Lane, IP4 EPE; B Howarth, Lymefield Drive, M28 4NA; Paul Smith, Dirker Drive, HD7 6AP; Peter Featherstone, Adel Wood Place, LS16 8JL; Stephen Williams, Gardenia Avenue, LU3 2NP; David Hall, Stothard Road, M32 9HA; Brian Nicholas, Nether Court, CO9 2HE; Brent McNish, Cambridge Road, SR3 2DQ; Mark Putterill, Melford Close, S75 6EF; Antony Perkins, Calder Close, OL14 0RT; Terence Murphy, Clarence Street, WA12 9EN; S W Gilbert, Mountford Avenue, DE4 4AT; Stuart Latham, Honister Place, DL5 7DL; Richard Holmes, Prestbury Road, GL52 2DT; Sunil Tailor, Forge Lane, TW13 6UW; Dean Alan Coles, Bushley Close, B98 7TX; Mr Robert Kerr, Moulin Place, G52 3LB; Mr L Walker (Jnr), Albert Road, L13 8DZ; Philip Bancroft, Knowsley Road, L35 0PA; Michael Harman, Arthur Street, HU19 2AU; Paul Crich, Hills Road, ML10 6LQ; Paul Evans, Birkett Avenue, L65 9BY; Alan Watson, Killearn Street, G22 5AG; G Flavin, Shirland Road, W9 2EL; Harjit Singh, Coule Royd, HD5 9RF; Darren Chichester, Tyn-Y-Parc Road, CF4 6BJ; D T Walker, Moredun Parkview, EH17 7NB; Mr R Allibone, Sheridan Road, BN14 8ET; Timothy Chan, High Street, AB3 2JQ; M McSwiggan, Route Des Coutre, Channel Islands; Michael Lee Woodger, Dagenham Road, RM13 7TA; Micholas Leung, Springwell Road, TW1 9ED; Mrs J E Staniforth, Berry Hill, WS12 5UJ; R Smith, Kennington Road, PR2 4ES; Chris Workman, St.Gerard's Road, B91 1UB; Scott Logan, Carlisle Road, ML11 9RA; G J Bostock, Westmorland Road, M31 1HN; Vincent, Bath Street, EH15 1EY; Mr D West, Prittle Close, SS7 3YR; Ceri Davies, Kingthorne Street, DD11 2LZ; Craig Cooper, Wakefield Road, ST4 5PU; Martin Ellis, Hill Grove, HD3 3TL; Paul Davison, Tewkesbury, NE12 0PF; Mr Anthony Murray, Bow Butts, KY10 3UT; Nathan Havell, Belchamp Road, CO9 4JT; Robert Norton, Rainsbrook Drive, CU11 6UE; John Bell, Tresdale Park, TR27 5DX; Matthew Singleton, The Grove, Kent; David Stent, Beechwood Avenue, HA4 6EJ; Martin Fox, Summerhill Drive, BT17 0RE.

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GRAB A M
GAME FO

CHOOSE ANY ONE O

ZOIDS

Awarded Best Strategy Game for two years running. But it's not all strategy – engage in the most exciting arcade strategy there is. Merge minds with one of your Zoids in a desperate attempt to find the mighty Zoidzilla. All icon controlled.
"A Masterpiece!" AMTIX! Accolade, 93%, June 1986

SAM FOX STRIP POKER

Play a great game of Poker with the pouting one herself – Sam Fox. Slammed by the feminists . . . Loved by the chauvinists . . . Make your Amstrad go hot and sweaty under the collar!
"It had me glued to the screen!" AMTIX!, June 1986, 68%

With the great freebie-a-gogo give away offer!

Make your Amstrad go . . .

'Ahhhheyyyyyyyeaaaaaaaio!'

OR

'Corrrrrr!'

OR

'Bif! Bash! Bop!'

OR

'Stomp, stomp, zaaaap!'

Oh, rapturous day! A fabulous freebie game? For little old me? And all I have to do is take out a year's subscription with Britain's liveliest Amstrad magazine? (That's AMTIX!) What's the catch?

None! Get yourself a subscription and grab a great MARTECH freebie-a-gogo game into the bargain. And not only will you be the proud owner of a brand new, never been played before, bona fide, soft and strong, full price, totally brilliant game! But by the end of the year you'll have amassed all the information you'll need to know on how to enjoy life with your Amstrad!

Not only that, but when you order software from Auntie Aggie you'll get a glorious 10% discount!

IF you are an existing subscriber, you can order any one of the games at a special discount rate of £5 for the cassette version and just £7.50 per disk, but remember to quote your subscription number. If you want the Joyce dust covers they cost just £6.95 in this special deal.

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NE OF THE FOLLOWING

TARZAN

Take the role of the lord of the jungle as he makes his way through an arcade adventure to rescue Jane. Can you defy the mighty jungle and overcome its deadly inhabitants? Colourful graphics, great theme tune – great game!
"A superb action game!" AMTIX!, February 1987, 85%

UCHI MATA

Never seen before! Be one of the first people to experience a judo simulation that promises to be much more that a normal bash 'em up! Plan your moves, throw your opponent using all the skills in a traditional Judo round.

ALTERNATIVELY, if you don't wish to take advantage of a free game you can have a free three piece set of dust covers for your Joyce instead. They fit both the PCW8256 and PCW8512.

12 On The Spots, 12 Amtechs, 12 Amtips, 12 Arcanas, about 36 fabulous features, around 60 glorious gallery pictures, near enough a million Accolades and countless billions of comps! And what's more a magical AMTIX! subscription ensures the user against any further price rises or special one-offs! What could be better?

(A holiday in the Bahamas? A night with Madonna? Winning the pools? Being 112th in line to the throne? . . . Never!)

Dear Subscription Queen, Denise,
I have ticked the appropriate box to tell you what I'd like you to do for me!

TICK ANY ONE GAME!

( ) ZOIDS

( ) SAM FOX STRIP POKER

( ) TARZAN

( ) UCHI MATA

( ) DUST COVERS FOR MY JOYCE

If you want a disk version of the game just add £3 to your subscription charge (send in a cheque or postal order for £18 instead of £15).

MY NAME IS ....

AND I LIVE AT ....

....

....

.... *POSTCODE* ....

I am a new subscriber and enclose a cheque/postal order for £15.00, (or £18 if a disk version of the game is required) made payable to NEWSFIELD PUBLICATIONS.

OR

I am an existing subscriber but would like to take advantage of your offer and enclose a cheque/postal order for £5.00 (cassette) or £7.50 (disk) for one of the MARTECH games, OR £6.95 for my set of dust covers. My subscription number is:–

....

Send your payment straight away to AMTIX! Subscription Offer, Fairview, 47 Gravel Hill, LUDLOW, Shropshire SY8 1QS.

ANTHONY CLARKE

We've all just rushed back from the January Amstrad Show at the Novotel in London and there's not much time left to complete this issue. At least we have quite a bag of goodies for AMTECH which we collected while wandering around the stands.



AMTECH kicks off with a picture digitiser from DART Electronics which attaches to the DMP 2000 printer – we've all had a lot of fun playing with it in the office! Paul Sherreard takes us behind the scenes at TASMAN, and gives us an insight into what makes them one of the most successful serious software houses for the CPC and PCW machines. From DATABASE Software comes PLAN It for all the AMSTRAD machines – is it the answer to your financial worries or would a ledger be a better buy?.

LOCOMOTIVE have always tried to be trend-setters when it comes to PCW software, but this time they really have gone over the top with LOCOSPELL, which has a dictionary of no less than 102,000 words.

Now a quick apology. Our MODEM has packed up, and so I have been unable to get back to anyone who has left messages for AMTIX! on Prestel. We should be back on line by the time you read this. If you have a query about technical matters and have access to a modem then why not get in touch: our MBX number is 105845851, or send a letter to AMTECH, AMTIX!, 1/2 King Street, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1AQ.

The Screwdriver Awards system. AMTECH now has screwdrivers to give away — not to readers but to products reviewed. New and innovative hardware or software that either breaks new ground or improves on an existing concept is particularly likely to collect a screwdriver . . . but if we just like something a lot, we'll hand out an award.

None of your cheapo lead-alloy screwdrivers here — AMTECH only awards the best: gold, silver and bronze.

The Golden Screwdriver is given to a product that we reckon is the best thing ever produced in its field. Three screwdrivers appear with the review . . .

The Silver Screwdriver turns up in the guise of a pair of screwdrivers and indicates that the product is very good, but perhaps not terribly innovative . . .

The Bronze Screwdriver is awarded for competence in an existing field. A neat implementation of a well established idea earns a single screwdriver.

DIGITISING A PICTURE, DART STYLE!

Up until now, **Dart Electronic**'s main claim to fame has been their light pen which came out early last year. Their second piece of Amstrad hardware – *The Dart Scanner* – has finally arrived, and looks set to become a bestseller for the CPC range.

The scanner is a picture digitiser which attaches to the head of a DMP 2000 printer. The subject that you wish to scan is placed in the printer, with the paper select switch on the top right set to the *friction* position. The software controls the print-head so that it moves across the paper being scanned – distinguishing between light and dark shades by using a light variable capacitor, and translating this information into binary signals. It then dumps this information onto the screen – the pixels being switched either 'on' or 'off', as the software is incapable of distinguishing shades of grey. When scanning is complete, the finished screen can be saved to either disk or tape, and can be recalled for editing by most art packages.



One small problem with scanning an A4 sheet, is that the printer loses its grip on the paper as the bottom three inches pass through the machine. This is a common problem with the DMP 2000, and can be solved by photocopying the subject to be scanned so that it occupies the top of the paper. Photocopying can also be a help if the desired image is glossy, or unusually dark – simply set the



photocopier to its lightest reproduction (or dark original) setting, the resulting image should be acceptable to the scanner's tolerance levels.

Pressing S puts the computer into the scan menu, this provides the user with a number of options. This includes asking if one or two screens are to be scanned, thus allowing a larger picture to be placed in memory. If you wish only to scan a certain area of the subject, you must set a left margin (the scanner then ignores anything to the left of this line). Next comes the magnification factor, which scans a smaller area of the page in much greater detail. Once the desired options have been selected, the printhead then starts to scan across the page and a picture is built up on the screen.

After about ten lines have been scanned, it is a good idea to check how well the subject is digitising. If the picture is too light (or too dark) the sensitivity of the head can be changed until the best results are obtained - though changing the sensitivity doesn't effect the lines already scanned. Once the correct setting is found, holding the F key down clears the screen (this takes about three or four seconds). When this process is complete, return the paper to its original 'top of form' setting and start digitising the picture again.

THE ART PACKAGE

A small Art package is also built-in to the main program so that a little editing and touching up can be done to the main picture. This contains a number of options, as follows:

Two commands may be used to move the digitised image around on the screen: **Copy Area** and **Scroll Area**. Before starting to move anything, a box must be placed around the area of the screen to be manipulated. Using either command causes a box to appear on the screen and it may be moved around using the cursor keys, and enlarged or reduced using the shift keys. When this box is positioned over the image area to be manipulated, pressing the COPY key then 'fixes' the box to define its contents.

Copy Area is selected with the X key, and puts the user in control of an empty box which can be moved around the screen with the cursor keys. Once the empty box has been positioned the COPY key is used to copy the marked block. One problem which I encountered with this option was that the program provided no feedback when the COPY key was pressed to confirm that an action had been accepted – although a help function is available via the M key.

Scroll Area allows a box to be defined and placed on the screen as with the **Copy Area** command, but once the contents of the box have been confirmed with a press of the COPY key, the boxed off area can be scrolled under the control of the cursor keys. If you make a mistake it is hard to rectify – the original picture is not kept as a backup. An UNDO function would have been helpful.

The *Box Blank* option can be used to mask out the areas of screen around a piece that you want to keep. For example a picture of fox may have been digitised, but there is greenery surrounding it which is not required. Using the cursor keys it is possible to define a box around the required subject, and then by simply hitting COPY the image on the rest of the screen is erased.

Clear Area is the opposite of *Box/Blank*, and clears the inside of a pre-defined box whose size can be changed by using the shifted cursor keys.

Zoom allows direct editing of the screen by zooming in a small area. The cursor and shift keys move a small cursor around the enlarged screen, and the COPY key toggles a pixel on and off. At the bottom right of the screen a normal size representation of the edited section is shown to give a realistic idea of what the picture will eventually look like.

Text can be added to the digitised subject, unfortunately only using the Amstrad's built in font. Also, only Mode Two text can be added, this drawback can be avoided by using a different art package (such as the Rainbird Art studio), or simply by drawing directly onto the screen using the Zoom Command.

As an everyday utility there may be very few uses for The DART Scanner. However, it can be a lot of fun. Computer graphics designers (and those who require pictures for Page Maker) may find a great many uses for this innovative piece of hardware, though limitations arise as only Mode Two pictures can be digitised. At a cost of £79.95 the scanner is not exactly cheap, but compared to similar products (which could cost up to £2,000!) it still represents good value.

The DART Electronics scanner picks up a Silver Screwdriver.

Price £79.95 for the CPC range of Micros

SPEED WRITING BCPL STYLE!

Meet **BCPL**. It is what is known as a "Systems Programming Language", and in general its main use is writing compilers, word processors and even operating systems for the larger machines – although the version being reviewed has been changed so that it is possible to use the firmware of the Amstrad machines and so allow fairly complex games to also be written at a speed close to that of machine code.

At first sight *BCPL* seems to be simply a version of PASCAL ,but unlike PASCAL, *BCPL* programs have no variable types, making variable processing both fast and simple. Instead all "variables" are simply pointers to the memory location at which the value is stored. Problems could arise, however, if you try to use a variable as a number when it was initially set up as a string of characters. Even procedures are simply variables pointing to the location of the sub-routine.

As a language for a newcomer it may well be quite difficult to get to grips with, not because the language is complex, but because the flexibility of the language plagues the programmer with those same afflictions that machine code users come up against. In BASIC the interpreter or compiler will simply stop execution when a meaningless or illegal operation is found, *BCPL* does not, so it is possible to quite easily crash the system by referencing or changing undefined memory locations. As with the machine code this means that debugging is a case of finding the routine that is crashing the system, which in turn is probably being *bombed* by another routine and so on.

BCPL comes in three different forms all in one package, which could start a new trend in the packaging of software.

For those who have ROM boards, CPC range only, the package contains the compiler on ROM, which, when installed, will also free an extra 16k for code when compiling directly into memory. The AMSDOS version works in the same way as the ROM version, which means any files, compatible with AMSDOS, can also be run with the ROM installed. Finally there is a CP/M 2.2 and Plus version which enables *BCPL* code to be compatible across the range of Amstrad machines, including the two PCW's

Besides the *BCPL* compiler main program, the AMSDOS and ROM based versions come with a suite of four utilities and a further four examples of *BCPL* programming. Probably the most important extras are the input/output libraries which allow use of external devices – printers, serial ports, EPROM blowers – and direct manipulation of the CPC's own hardware. Graphics library routines are included in a separate file which can optionally be included in the final compiled version of a *BCPL* source file.

A full editor for *BCPL* programs is included with the package, but it is also possible to create programs using any wordprocessor that can produce standard ASCII files, in particular the PROTEXT wordprocessor from **Arnor** which allows files to be stored in memory and then accessed by the *BCPL* compiler directly without having to reload the text file. Once any file is compiled it may be interesting to investigate how the finished program does its job. For this purpose a Z80 disassemler is included, but as this is still in its source code form it may be edited or even added to. Many of the less serious users may wish to write games which require quite a lot of graphic handling and to demonstrate this a *Space Invaders* varient is included in its source code form. A quick look through the code should enable anyone to write programs that require redefined graphics or sound, something that is sadly lacking from many other

compiled languages for the Amstrad range, thus meaning the user had to resort to machine code patches.

The CP/M version also includes input/output libraries which take full advantage of the CP/M BIOS (basic input output system) and BDOS (basic disk operating system). A further version of the source file creator, editor is also included, but once again this can be dropped in favour of any standard wordprocessor. (Locoscript users should note that files must be saved in ASCII format).

The major differences between the AMSDOS and CP/M systems are minimal and generally fall into the graphics and input/output libraries, and can readily be remedied simply by using a different library routine, so cutting down the amount of changes to the code.

Some *BCPL* programs may be written with other machines in mind or as an exercise for school or college, and so to make the source code more presentable for this purpose a file called *TIDY* is included which will indent procedures and loops properly, and generally split up the code so it is more readable.

The 63 page manual does not pretend to be anything but information for the user already experienced in the *BCPL* language, and as such gives a great deal of information about the internal structure of the language and how memory is used, a very important consideration for the systems programmer. A full list of acceptable commands is given, followed by chapter explaining the detractions from standard *BCPL*. If you want to embark upon learning a new language then you could do a lot worse than start with *BCPL*, though it may be a good idea to read "BCPL - the language and its compiler" by Martin Richards and Colin Whitby-Strevens, which will give the beginner a good grounding in the basic aspects of *BCPL*. At £29.95, from **Arnor**, the package represents excellent value, especially for a language as flexible this.

For opening a larger world to the normal user Arnor collect a Silver Screwdriver award.



MORE WORD POWER FOR JOYCE

For a long time now *Locoscript* users have been without a spell-checker that would ignore the special codes, and cope with the small amount of compaction involved when a *Locoscript* file is saved. They have had to resort to saving the file in ASCII format so that checkers such as *Prospell* could be used. **Locomotive Software** have at last produced a dedicated *Locoscript* spelling checker for the PCW8256/8512. It boasts not only a built-in 32,000 word dictionary, but also a 77,000 word disk based dictionary - compiled by those master dictionary makers, **Longmans**. It is also possible for the user to supply his own dictionary if required.

The problem of spell-checking files with *Locoscript* codes has been solved by supplying a new version of *Locoscript* which incorporates *Locospell* and its menus. This abolishes the problem faced by most word processor users of re-booting the machine with another program before checking can be carried out.

The *New Locoscript* works in much the same way as normal, with the exception of the modes function (f7) which now includes a spell-check menu with four modes of operation.

The first option checks the whole of a file in memory. However, it does have certain drawbacks if a large file resides within *Locoscript*. This problem is surmounted by the 'Just forwards from here' option, which simply checks from wherever the cursor is placed to the end of the file. If Locospell was to run out of memory at any point in the text, it would be a simple matter of finding the point the program had reached and continuing on from there with the second option.

Single words can be checked at any point in the text, though if the word is more than 32 letters long then this would be pointless. For example, PNEUMONOULTRA-MICRO SCOPIC SILICO-VOLCANONIOSIS would simply be skipped. The main use for this option is simply to check the spelling of words the user may not use often, for example if the user were not too sure how to spell **emphasise** then he could type emph, being reasonably sure that this was a correct start, and follow it with a single word check which would throw up several word options for the user to choose the correct one.

Tut Tut, the checker seems to have found a wrong word, but what can be done about it?

```
Stopped at:
        discmanship

Replacement:
        directorship

  Use suggested replacement
  Replace and then edit
  Edit word in context
  Consult dictionary
  Ignore this word
✓ Mark this word correct
  Add to user dictionary
```

The new MODES menu, with spell-check options.

```
Editor sub-modes:

  Edit Header
  Edit Identify text
  Insert text
  Disc management

Check spelling:

  All of document
✓ Just forwards from here
  Single word
  User dictionary upkeep
```



The last option in this menu is *dictionary upkeep*. As the user continually adds to the dictionary, it is inevitable that certain little-used words or even misspellings are going to be added by accident, and it is for this purpose that the final option has been included. The user directory (not the system directory which is always untouched) can be corrected by simply moving to the offending word, and pressing the + or ± key. The + key clears the word at the current cursor position and waits for the user to type in a new word. The ± key also deletes the word at the cursor position, but remains in 'cursor mode' and waits for the user to move to the next word which is to be edited.

When an incorrect or unrecognised word is found, *Locospell* puts the user into a second menu of seven options.

If an incorrect word is found, *Locospell* tries to find an alternative. It then comes back to the user with the highlight bar on the 'Use suggested replacement' option. Pressing **RETURN** will simply replace the incorrect word with the suggested alternative. Moving the highlight bar down to 'Replace and then edit' followed by pressing **RETURN** has the same effect as the previous command, except that the user is also given the option of editing the word before carrying on; for example the word may need to be made plural.

'Edit word in context' places the user in the text, with the incorrect word along with the preceeding and following spaces highlighted. The word can then be directly edited before continuing with the check. Unfortunately this option seemed quite difficult to use, and mistakes (which I readily made) were hard to rectify. The simplest method that I found for using this option was to mark the word with a symbol which could easily be recognised later, and then edit the text directly from *Locoscript*.

At times the word which *Locospell* gives as an alternative may not be correct. In case of this eventuality, a 'Consult dictionary' option has been included which scans all of the dictionaries on the current drive to see if a better match can be found; this is where the 77,000 word dictionary on side B of the disk (and the users own dictionary) comes into play.

Some words may have been deliberately misspelled to put a point across and require a **(SiC)** code to show this. 'Mark word correct' does just this, by placing **(SiC)** at either the start or end of the word depending on the users choice.

Finally if an unrecognised word comes up which is definitely correct, the user may wish to add it to the dictionary. If no user dictionary can be found, the 'Add to user dictionary' option creates a new directory on the 'Start of day disk' (the disk from which *Locospell* was booted).

Locospell must boast the largest Dictionary for the PCW range, and readily copes with the needs of most people. The program may not be as flexible as many other spell-checkers, but this is more than made up for by the fact that it is available from within the word processor itself.

Simply for the size of the dictionary and the speed of checking, *Locospell* picks up a Bronze Screwdriver.

Several of the possible changes to the incorrect word.

PLAN YOUR WAY BACK INTO THE BLACK

Bank: Cameron Provincial — Statement of Account

Branch: Ludlow — Account Number 9166543

Date	Particulars	Debited	Credited	Balance
b/f				1987.00
19/01	753000 Diners Club	4345.00		2358.00 dr
19/01	982300 Willing Will	862.00		3220.00 dr
19/01	Bk Chg Naughty Nora	643.00		3863.00 dr
19/01	Cash Dispenser	65.00		3928.00 dr
19/01	Credit NEWSFIELD		3848.00	80.00 dr
19/01	Int Glynis	5000.00		5080.00 dr
19/01	St Ord Rubber Gerel	543.00		5623.00 dr

Press a key

Cameron's creative financing! A view of the Bank Balance.

Database Software, part of the **Database Publishing** group, have made their first contribution to the CPC and PCW market with *Plan It*, the 'complete' personal organiser. The program consists of a suite of three menu-driven programs. The first deals with all of your personal accounts, credit card payments, mortgage, bank balance, and home expenditure on a month to month basis.

Selecting 'expenditure accounts' allows a log to be compiled of all bank transactions that have taken place under certain categories, (Mortgage, phone bill) and keeps a record of which of the three ways the transaction took place, cash, cheque or credit card. With the 'cash and cheque' option, the user is prompted to enter further details concerning the cheque number and payee or the credit card type (American Express, store card). Any of the twenty-four headings, for each transaction type, may be changed to the user's preference (but not deleted). A deletion option would have been of great use, as it would obviously release more space for further transactions of each type.

Major Madness

The major problem with the Personal accounts section it that only 15 transactions of each expenditure heading can be handled in any one month, a problem which would be encountered by any small company. Although secondary to the first problem, there is another which is potentially more devastating. The CPC version crashes regularly, and doesn't allow the user to recover any of the data lost because a complete **NEW** is done to the program.

Silicon Paper

The Card index is a simple form of data-base which will store information about a specific subject. For example, the program could be used to store clients' names, address, telephone numbers, with each record being held on a different file. Only seven items can be stored on each 'CARD' so the program is a little limited, but each field is redefinable and could be used for some other purpose. The card index can be used in much the same way as a normal database, with the ability to sort the cards into order (using any of the fields), and to do selective searches to find specific data. It also includes the facility to print out labels, or the justified reports which may have been saved from the Personal Accounts package or Financial Diary.

The label facility suffers from several problems, the biggest being that only one label may be printed across the page – therefore normal label paper that has two or three labels is useless.

The Financial Diary option allows archive or work files to be set up without date restrictions so that appointments may be made years ahead. Each set of entries is bundled into their respective months, somewhat reducing the danger of deleting appointments accidentally. As each entry is made it is automatically put into the right month and year data table, however there is a restriction of 200 appointment entries.

As a personal organiser, *Plan It* falls down in many areas. For example there is a distinct lack of memory space for entries, even on the PCW version, and as such it is only of use to the small time user who would be better off just keeping ledger records. The flexibility of the system is also in doubt. This is due to the Menu system which, although helpful to the first time user, is nothing but a bind to those who want to use the system properly.

In the words of Accountant, Michael Sykes, "At the price, this system offers quite a lot to the home user who may only have to run a household, or to children who may want to keep a list of club members. However, I would advise the serious user against buying it, because they would only have to start the whole business of entering the data again once they move onto a more powerful program."

Plan It costs £29.95 and is available for both CPC and PCW machines.

DEMO DISCS FOR YOUR AMSTRAD

Just before the last PCW show **Vanguard** released an amplifier and air suspended pod speakers for the CPC machines. Now **Vanguard**, in association with **BIT 7** have brought our two "Easy Listening" demo tapes/discs with such well known tunes as **Golden Brown** by *The Stranglers*, **Axel F** by *Harold Faltermeyer*, and **Toccata and Fugue in Dm** by *J S Bach*. The tapes cost £6.50 each, while the Disc versions are £12.95. More in the series will appear, with tunes like **Equinox** and **Oxygene** by *Jean-Micheal Jarre* to be included.

A PLASTIC COVER FOR JOYCE

Hacking away on your computer on those cold winter nights, coffee pot by your side, and a mug of coffee spills all over your Joyce. Anyone who has ever spilled liquid on their PCW8256 will know the consequences; even water will damage the keyboard for life as it mixes with the dust inside and acts like a thick paste on the keys. The **KADO** cover for PCW and PC range will stop dust and liquids entering the keyboard. The only problem could be cleaning the cover once the coffee has stuck to it.

The covers would seem to solve this problem and cost £7.50. They are available from **KADO Enterprises, Kilmorey Court, 279 St Margaret's Road, Twickenham, Middlesex TW1 1PN.**

in search of
TASMAN SOFTWARE

Our man from London, PAUL SHERREARD, discovered the joys of a 125 when he travelled north by British Rail to interview Robin Thomson, one of the bosses of TASMAN SOFTWARE.

When you're tired of shooting aliens or rolling marbles through endless screens, and you feel the urge to compose a novel (or just write some letters), then you are going to need a word processor program. In my opinion, you can't find a better program of this type than the *Tasword Word Processor* from **Tasman** Software.

I've always been a fan of **Tasman** programs and I leapt at the opportunity to visit them. My intention was to have an investigative look around and generally find out the history of the company.

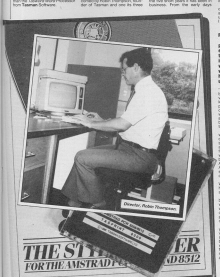
After an impressive debut journey on British Rail's 125, I was welcomed by Robin Thompson, founder of Tasman and one its three directors. He started the company five years ago, selling a word processor program for the Sinclair ZX81. This was quickly followed by a word processor for the Spectrum. Then came *Tasword 2* for the Spectrum which, as Robin told me, was very successful and very popular.

After *Tasword 2* came – almost simultaneously – *Tasword* word processors for the Amstrad, MSX's, Einstein and, a little later for the Commodore.

Tasman has come a long way in the five short years it has been in business. From the early days when Robin (then a college lecturer) wrote a program for the ZX81 for his own use, he quickly found he had a product which people wanted – so he sold it! Now, **Tasman** employs 13 people with three directors; Robin, Simon Howarth who designed the **Tasman** interfaces for the Spectrum, and Martin Rogers who looks after the finances (and who Robin jokingly refers to as the bureaucrat of the company).

Do you get involved in programming now, or are you too involved in running the business, I asked?

Robin – "I still do programming on some products, basically giving as much time as I can allow, but, unfortunately not as much time as I would wish".



Director, Robin Thompson.

PUBLIC FEEDBACK

The directors of the company are the decision makers, and I asked Robin where the company will move next, in terms of new products? He wouldn't tell me!!! All that he would tell me was that they had "new products actively under development!"

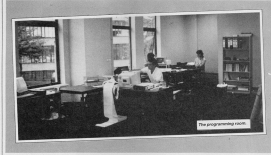
"We do though, get a lot of feedback from the public which convinces us we can continue to market word processors to meet peoples requirements. We have developed a lot of expertise in word processors, and we will be staying with them. And we will also be looking at any new machines that come on the market."

I was really interested to find out which was their biggest seller to date. I thought this would give some idea how many computers, and which ones, were being used for word processors. The answer was that – though things were had been about even between the Amstrad and the Spectrum – Amstrad sales are now the strongest, with even a word processor for the Joyce available.

"Tasword for the Joyce . . . Why bother?" I asked. "It already has its own built-in word processor"

Robin – "This really was because of public demand. We were unsure whether this venture would be viable, but it has turned out as a good seller and has proved to be a very popular product.

For those who use *Style writer*, you may have noticed the Joyce version of *Tasword, Tasword 8000*, includes 2 fonts already built-in, and the version of style writer for the Joyce has another 6 fonts available, two of which are not available for the CPC series. I asked Robin whether they would


The programming room.

now bring out more fonts for the CPC computers?

Robin: "Unfortunately, we have no intention of releasing further fonts. Actually we do have further typefaces already done but there doesn't appear to be any demand for them."

Are you worried about the competition I asked?

Robin – "Not really, we are aware of the competition, and a certain amount of competition is healthy, it makes you strive harder with your products, and of course there is room for more than one word processor per machine in the market."

Talking about the competition, I asked Robin whether he saw any competition from the Page and Magazine makers that are starting to appear on the market. These are the programs that allow you to make your own newspaper or page layout for posters, etc. They allow copy fitting and picture placement?

Robin – "We have an eye on what the competition is doing, but we don't feel that there will be much to worry about. These programs will make a price list or a brochure, but in order to type a letter or report, the word processor will still be needed."

"Will **Tasman** move into this area of magazine and page makers?" I asked.

Robin – "It's entirely possible!"

If you read about my visit to **Pride Utilities** the other month, you may remember their comment that the majority of their sales were to the overseas market, as the British market was more games orientated. I put the same point to Robin. Were his sales similarly apportioned?

Robin – "A substantial part of our business is for export, either selling direct or through licensing agreements with agents in various countries. We sell throughout North and Western Europe, in fact every English speaking country abroad. We also have a certain amount of representation in other countries. The United States was also a very lucrative market for us. Here we released programs for the Timex 2068 – which were conversions from the Spectrum – and they did very well. Having said that the UK is still **Tasman**'s major market and I think people will continue to use their micros for serious applications – such as word processors. I don't think this market will go away."

ANY PIRACY WORRIES?

How about piracy here and abroad -- are you worried about it?

Robin – "We have no worries about piracy in this country at all because, so far as we are aware, there is no commercial piracy that affects our products."

How do you know this?

Robin – "We sell the sort of products that generate enquiries and we can tell from this feedback where our products came from. Also our programs are upgradeable, so when the consumer sends us back the original tape or disk we can see what's in the market. You see, what we are talking about is the commercially produced pirate copy – one that the public would think was the original thing – if these did appear on the market we would know about it even if it only was one or two programs."

"We do not worry about piracy abroad either, because in the very few places where it does occur, it appears to be limited to a particular locality only.

I asked whether the save *Tasword* option from the main menu, encouraged people to pass copies to their friends?

Robin – "One of the strengths of our word processor is the way the program can be customised, you can make your own word processor basically, so you must be able to save the customised version of *Tasword*. If people do want to pass copies to their friends there is nothing we can do about it."

So how about **Tasman** itself, are you a large company? Where did the name come from and what about expansion plans and programs from the public?

Robin – "The name **Tasman** came out of a hat. It means nothing in itself and stands for nothing; it was just a name that fitted. We employ 13 people at present but this will increase gradually as we expand. As a point of interest, we have all our high volume duplication done outside but we also have facilities to handle low volume duplication in-house."

"As regards programs from the public. We don't actively invite people to send in software to us to view, but we do still get quite a lot and all of it is looked at, but, we take on very few. *Tas Diary* was one such program which you may be interested to know, arrived here well over 12 months ago, and had to be changed and amended to come up to the right standard. But we do look at any programs that are sent to us."

"We also have five in-house programmers, two are working on another word processor product, one on a spell-check product and the other two on a hardware product."

One of the latest releases for the CPC's is *Check-spell*, I know that the program contains over 20,000 words just how did **Tasman** compile this dictionary?

Robin – "Well, it wasn't done by entering each word one-by-one. As we have been in business for quite some time we have amassed an enormous amount of correspondence so what we did was to employ some students, using this correspondence, to create the dictionary. We started with an empty dictionary, ran the program and when it stopped at a word told it to learn the word, and being empty it would stop at every word. Then we wedged a matchstick under the 'L' key and it learned every word it stopped at. Then we checked every word very carefully."

Will *Tasword* for the CPC's change anymore or is it in its final form with no more upgrades offered?

Robin – "Unfortunately that's it! It's a pity because we are all the time thinking up nice touches to go into our programs, such as line drawing on the *Tasword 8000* and its extra speed over the CPC series, all for the Joyce. But you cannot keep going back and making changes to existing products.

With two interesting visits under my belt I think it's time to ask you, the reader, if you would like me to visit any other serious software company? Let me know by writing to AMTIX! Towers and I'll do my best to take you there, albeit by the written word.

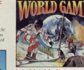


HERE'S YOUR CHANCE TO WIN A HOLIDAY OF A LIFETIME

A fantastic week for two in Rome. Combine the excitement and spectacle of the World Athletics Championships with the sights and pleasures of one of the world's most beautiful cities.



Rome is a living vibrant museum with its 2000 year old past stamped all over its modern 20th century face. Visit the ancient Colosseum, scene of athletic prowess of another civilisation. Gather with the crowds outside the Vatican, waiting eagerly for Sunday morning blessing from the Pope. Enjoy the hospitality of a nation renowned for it's friendliness and for living life to the full. Rome is not all museums and history, its also a modern city overflowing with fashion, shopping and nightlife. From the moment you touch down to the time of your final departure your week will be crammed full with excitement and fun.



World Athletics Championships '87'

Held every four years the World Athletics Championships rival the Olympics for their prestige and competitiveness. It is one of the few opportunities for athletes to gain worldwide acclaim and for spectators to enjoy history in the making.

How to Enter

Simply answer the three questions below and the three questions printed on the packaging of the game "World Games", complete the entry form and return all items to the address shown. In the event of a tie break the most original com-pletion of the caption, as determined by the judges, will be the winner.

WORLD GAMES

CBM 64/128	*Cassette £9.99*	*Disk £14.99*
Amstrad	*Cassette £9.99*	*Disk £14.99*
Spectrum 48K	*Cassette £8.99*	
Atari ST	*Disk £24.95*	

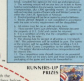
Your Holiday includes



The winning prize includes two air tickets to Rome, hotel accommodation for one week, two tickets for the World Championships plus £100 spending money.

Runners-up Prizes

The 25 runners-up will each receive copies of Supercycle and Winter Games for either the CBM 64/128, Spectrum or Amstrad.



RULES.

1. This competition is open to all residents of the U.K. except employees of U.S. Gold Limited, CentreSoft Limited and their associated companies, families and agencies.
2. The prizes stated will be awarded to the entrant who completes the questions correctly and in the event of a tie break, complete the caption in the most apt and original way.
3. The winning entrant will receive two air tickets to Rome, hotel accommodation for one week, two tickets for the world championships, plus £100 spending money. 25 runners up will each receive copies of Supercycle and Winter Games for either the C64/128, Spectrum or Amstrad.
4. Proof of posting will not be accepted as proof of delivery.
5. Entries altered, illegible or not completed in accordance with the rules of entry requirements will be disqualified.
6. All entries must be on an official entry form.
7. 'How to enter' forms part of the rules. All entries become the property of U.S. Gold and cannot be returned.
8. It is a condition of entry that the competitors agree to be bound over by the rules.
9. The closing date for receipt of all entries is 31st March 1987. The prizewinners will be notified by post. The names of the winners will be available to those sending a S.A.E. marked 'World Games Competition' to the address below.
10. The judges' decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.
11. The competition entry should consist of six answered questions, three on the entry form and three included in the packaging of the game and are to be forwarded to:

WORLD GAMES ™

Competition



RUNNERS-UP PRIZES

RUNNERS-UP PRIZES



Complete the questions and caption below together with the completed questions from the packaging and return to the address below. All entries must be received no later than 31st March 1987

Question 1. How many hills is Rome built on ....

Question 2. In what year was the Roman invasion of Britain ....

Question 3. Who painted the renowned ceiling of the Sistine Chapel ....

Caption (complete in not more than 25 words) Rome is an appropriate venue for the World Games because ....

Name .... Age .... Address ....

Tel: .... My computer is a ....

U.S. Gold Ltd., Units 2/3 Holford Way, Holford, Birmingham B6 7AX. Tel: 021 356 3388

THROWING DOWN THE

As related (in a strong Cockney accent) by RICHARD EDDY

Cor blimey, strike a lite, down in London, 'onest guvnor, squeeeeze me a lemon! No messing about 'ere we are in London (somewhere south of Ludlow, and a little bit bigger) for the ultimate in challenges – Gauntlet. None of yer piddling half-baked challenges here guv.

The Novotel in Hammersmith, famed for its hospitality and slippery bathroom floors, was the scene for the recent Amstrad show; full of tired account executives getting high on the latest revolutionary spreadsheet programs. The old 'Yawn syndrome' struck the gaming gastronauts that turned out *en masse*.

Luckily good ol' Uncle Newsfield turned up with an Amstrad, a pile of games and a veritable plethora of waggling good joysticks – in a vain attempt to bring a spark of life to the show.

And it worked! From the moment the first chord of the *Gauntlet* theme tune struck up the stand was awash with joystick junkies, all clammering to get their greasy paws on the joystick. Searching through the crowd we found two proficient players both eager to throw down the *Gauntlet* – pick it up – challenge each other and battle it out in front of the millions. Er, thousands? hundreds? Okay, there was about twenty people around but it was very exciting.

Martin Higgins representing Gosport, and Mark Wilson repre-



Martin (left) and Mark find time to smile after receiving their awards after the Gauntlet challenge.

AMTIX! CHALLENGE!

THE GOLDEN GAUNTLET

senting Rochester were the prospective heroes – and selected their characters in preparation for the onslaught. Martin took Merlin the Grand Wizard for his power of casting spells and Mark decided upon the nifty Elf. The rules were simple but effective: they were to play *Gauntlet* for half an hour and the winner would be the one who had amassed the highest score in that time. Let the challenge begin!

In case you don't already know, *Gauntlet* has been rocking the arcades for some time now, and during its short lifetime has spawned many clones of varying qualities. It's a simple concept – rush around a labyrinth killing off hoards of oncoming foes, collecting treasure and food to stay alive. Martin and Mark were well versed with the two-player game and began playing in earnest.

Unleashed onto the playing area, Martin guided the Wiz around in professional style – beating up ghosts and collecting the odd artefact. Meanwhile, Mark's Elf took a quick look around and hurriedly headed for the exit. Not wanting to be left behind the Wiz followed shortly after. On to level two and the fun really began. Elf took the lead this time, pushing onward and collecting keys and lots of treasure from the chests that litter the floor. The Wiz tried to make up for this, and rapidly started scavenging for food. He also made a futile attempt at killing the Elf off – no hope!

Having collected a key, Mark's Elf opened a doorway, unleashing a hoard of meanies. It wasn't long before he began to blast them all by himself while Wiz stayed well out of the way, behaving like a proper wimp. With the hoard disposed of, he headed off in search of an exit with a score of 980 and a health of 1921. The third level is an open plan one which leaves lots of room to wander around killing the ghosts which roam the floor. This was exactly what the Elf decided to do. Unfortunately Martin thought that it might be more helpful if he started hunting down some food, as his Wizard was quickly running low on energy. Passing by the first exit the duo headed off in search of treasure and left level three with a score of 2260 to Mark's Elf and 1261 for Martin's Wizard.

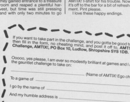
At the start of level four the Wizard put on a brave face and opened a door. This resulted in the arrival of a mammoth hoard of Grunts. The Elf stepped in and quickly disposed of them with his trusty bow and arrow building up the score as he did so. The Wizard headed off in search of an exit, while the Elf got rid of the final few Grunts who had hung behind the hoard. The two disappeared from level four slightly better off than when they began.

With the tension mounting, more people surrounded the stand and still the battle went on for the Show's *Gauntlet* champ. Level five and six were disposed of quickly in a desperate attempt to progress further into the game and both the players' score increased but their health fell rapidly.

Level seven saw some frantic action and devious tactics coming into play. The Wiz, faced with low energy, trapped the Elf to deal with the Deaths that were rapidly approaching. With a quick press of the spell key the Deaths were decimated – good stuff. Time was rapidly running out for the two Gauntleteers as they entered level eight together. Unfortunately they both appeared to have different ideas on the aim. While Mark's Elf went off in search of food to sustain his existence, Martin's Wizard decided it would be better to increase his present score by a bit of nifty ghost blasting. Suddenly they gained entrance to a treasure room and reaped a plentiful harvest, but time was still pressing and with only two minutes to go they returned to the labyrinth. It was panic stations now as they both went on a massive score hunt. Shooting, blasting, collecting – it was all there with some tricks that they'd picked up.

And as the final whistle went; there was a deathly silence as the assembled crowd looked at the scores . . . Mark was the victor and was declared the Show's *Gauntlet* hero! With a total score of 18,330 everyone agreed that he'd done an admirable job and was duly awarded a grand AMTIX! sweatshirt (once used) and a compilation disk. Poor old Martin, never mind he'd come a close second with 13,045 and collected an AMTIX! T-shirt for his trouble. Now it's off to the bar for a bit of refreshment. Pint please.

I love these happy endings.



If you want to take part in the challenge, and you gotta be good to do so, then fill in the form, no cheating mind, and post it off to, **AMTIX! Ego Challenge, AMTIX!, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.**

Ooooo, yes please, I am ever so modestly brilliant at games and I accept the gauntlet challenge to take on:

.... (Name of AMTIX! Ego chappie)

To a game of ....

I go by the name of ....

And my humble address is ....

....

....

Postcode ....

Telephone number ....

So ring me up and I'll be up to Ludlow faster than you can say 'Kill the Comps minion'! I promise I don't, and would never dream of, cheating so come on guys — give me a buzz please!

DRAGON'S LAIR II – Escape from Singe's Castle!

SOFTWARE PROJECTS' LATEST GAME IS ON THE WAY!

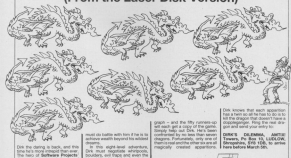
FIRST PRIZES OF FRAMED 'CROMALINS' OF DRAGON'S LAIR II







(From the Laser Disk Version)



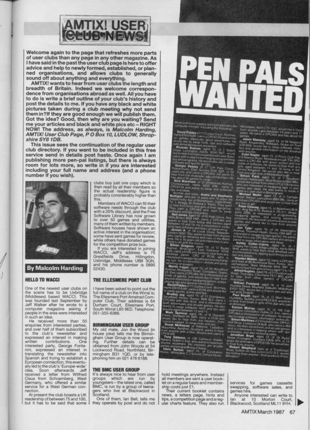
Dirk the daring is back, and this time he's more intrepid than ever. The hero of **Software Projects'** *Dragon's Lair* returns in the sequel *Dragon's Lair II - Escape From Singe's Castle*. Having saved King Aethelred's daughter Daphne, he now returns to Singe's castle to find the treasure which is rumoured to be hidden there. With the scaly fire-eater out of the way, the castle has now been taken over by the Lizard King, and Dirk must do battle with him if he is to achieve wealth beyond his wildest dreams.

In this eight-level adventure, Dirk must negotiate whirlpools, boulders, evil traps and even the Lizard King himself, before being confronted by the Mud Monsters who guard the very key to Dirk's escape. All these ingredients add up to a magical recipe for a game that will blister even the most battle-hardened fingers.

Software Projects' are offering four first prizes of a framed cromalin – a super high quality photograph – and the fifty runners-up will each get a copy of the game. Simply help out Dirk. He's been confronted by no less than seven dragons. Fortunately, only one of them is real and the other six are all magically created apparitions. Dirk knows that each apparition has a twin so all he has to do is to kill the dragon that doesn't have a doppleganger. Ring the real dragon and send your entry to:

DIRK'S DILEMMA, AMTIX! Towers, Po Box 10, LUDLOW, Shropshire, SY8 1DB, to arrive here before March 5th.

AMTIX!
COMPETITION



AMTIX! USER CLUB NEWS

Welcome again to the page that refreshes more parts of user clubs than any page in any other magazine. As I have said in the past the user club page is here to offer advice and help to newly formed, established, or planned organisations, and allows clubs to generally sound off about anything and everything.

AMTIX! wants to hear from user clubs the length and breadth of Britain. Indeed we welcome correspondence from organisations abroad as well. All you have to do is write a brief outline of your club's history and post the details to me. If you have any black and white pictures taken during a club meeting why not send them in? If they are good enough we will publish them. Got the idea? Good, then why are you waiting? Send me your articles and black and white pics etc – RIGHT NOW! The address, as always, is *Malcolm Harding, AMTIX! User Club Page, P O Box 10, LUDLOW, Shropshire SY8 1DB.*

This issue sees the continuation of the regular user club directory. If you want to be included in this free service send in details post haste. Once again I am publishing more pen-pal listings, but there is always room for lots more, so write in if you are interested including your full name and address (and a phone number if you wish).

By Malcolm Harding

HELLO TO WACCI

One of the newest user clubs on the scene has to be Uxbridge (Middlesex) based WACCI. This was founded last September by Jeff Walker after he wrote to a computer magazine asking if people in the area were interested in such an idea.

He received more than 50 enquiries from interested parties, and over half of them subscribed to the club's newsletter and expressed an interest in making written contributions. One interested party, George Fontanini, expressed an interest in translating the newsletter into Spanish and trying to establish a European connection, this eventually led to the club's 'Europe-wide' idea. Soon afterwards Jeff received a letter from Wilfried Claus from Schoemberg, West Germany, who offered a similar service for a West German connection.

At present the club boasts a UK readership of between 75 and 100, but it has to be said that some clubs buy just one copy which is then read by all their members so the actual readership figure is probably considerably higher than this.

Members of WACCI can fill their software needs through the club with a 20% discount, and the Free Software Library has now grown to over 50 games and utilities, many of them written by members. Software houses have shown an active interest in the organisation; some have sent games for review, while others have donated games for the competition prize box.

If you are interested in joining WACCI, Jeff's address is 75 Greatfields Drive, Hillingdon, Uxbridge, Middlesex UB8 3QN, and his phone number is 0895 52430.

THE ELLESMERE PORT CLUB

I have been asked to point out the full name of a club on the Wirral is; The Ellesmere Port Amstrad Computer Club. Their address is 64 Durham Court, Ellesmere Port, South Wirral L65 9ED. Telephone: 051-355-6366.

BIRMINGHAM USER GROUP

My old mate, Jon the Wood (in house joke) tells me the Birmingham User Group is now operating. Further details can be obtained from John Woods at 54 Lockwood Road, Northfield, Birmingham B31 1QD, or by telephoning him on 021 476 6188.

THE BMC USER GROUP

It's always nice to hear from user groups which are run by youngsters – the latest one, called BMC, is run by a group of teenagers who live at Blackwood in Scotland.

One of them, Ian Bell, tells me they operate by post and do not hold meetings anywhere. Instead all members are sent a user booklet on a regular basis and membership costs just £1.

Their current booklet contains news, a letters page, hints and tips, a competition page and a regular charts feature. They also run services for games cassette swapping, software sales, and games hire.

Anyone interested can write to Ian at 10 Morton Court, Blackwood, Scotland ML11 9YH.

PEN PALS WANTED

More and more readers want pen pals who are computer minded, including the following:-

David Piddes of 11 Curlew Court, Normley, Herts EN10 6JW, owns a CPC6128 and is mad on games, especially good adventures. He would like to swap hints, tips and software with Amstrad owners anywhere.

Ricardo Sueiras, aged 15, of 2 Solent Close, Lymington, Hants. SO41 9ST, would like to hear from fairly experienced Laser Basic users with a view to exchanging programming tips and programs. He would also like to swap software and tips for games.

Giorgio Veazey of 17 Cliff Park Close, Peacehaven, East Sussex BN9 8TR, is 22 years old, and owns a CPC464. He wants to hear from lots of people, age unimportant. He has about 50 games to swap.

Nick Wareham, of 33 Whitelands Avenue, Chorleywood, Herts WD3 5RE, owns a CPC6128 and wants to swap disk software, tips and ideas.

Brother and sister, **Andre and Stephanie Buttigier**, who are 14 years and 16 years old respectively, live at Stonehaven, Ugija Street, Ta' L-Ibragg, St Andrew's, Malta. They want to hear from boys and girls of their age group. They own a CPC464 and want to swap software and tips and pokes.

Neil Jones, aged 16, of 62 High Grove, Sea Mills Bristol BS9 2NP, owns a CPC464 and wants to hear from fellow 464 owners aged between 15 and 18. He is interested in swapping tape software and basic programming.

Jensen A, of 7A Lovat Close, Neasden, London NW2 7RJ, wants to hear from anyone who owns an Amstrad and lives in the Brent area. He is 16 years old and interested in anything to do with the micros.

Simon Gregson, aged 19, of 12 Byass Avenue, Bridlington, East Yorkshire YO16 5JG, owns a 6128 and wants to hear from any Amstrad owner, CPC or PCW, who is interested in swapping software and exchanging tips. He is interested in utilities and programming languages.

Martin Fagan, aged 15, of 10 Woodford Avenue, Monastery Road, Clondalkin, Dublin 22, Eire, owns a CPC464. He is interested in all kinds of games and would like to hear from anyone interested in swapping games, pokes, playing tips and general information.

David Piddes of 11 Curlew Court, Wormley, Herts EN10 6JW, owns a 6128 and would like to swap games, pokes and tips.

Bradley Joy, aged 14, of 11 Grangeway, Smallfield, Horley, Surrey, RH6 9LZ, owns a CPC464 with disk drive, and is interested in both adventures and arcade games. He also wants to swap software, hints and tips with anyone aged between 13 and 15.

Mark Spencer aged 18, of 8 Standish Close, Sheffield S5 8XR, owns a 6128 and would like to hear from any hackers – from novice to expert, to swap hints and tips.

David McKeever of Hillhead, Tarbolton, Mauchline, Ayrshire, Scotland, wants to hear from anyone with a Disc Wizard and owns a CPC6128.

Tony Gibbons of 136 Cameron Estate, Raheny, Dublin 5, Eire, who wants to hear from anyone anywhere. His interests are arcade games and programming in basic.

Chris Burton, aged 15, of Caretakers House, Whitstable C J School, Oxford Street, Whitstable, Kent CT5 1DQ, would like to hear from anyone aged between 14 years and 17 years. He owns a CPC464 and has about 50 games.

Jason Stanway, aged 16, of 26 Newpool Road, Knypersley, Biddulph, Stoke-on-Trent ST8 6NS, would like to swap software, hints, tips and general information on the Amstrad with anyone.

Colin Naylor, aged 15, of Priory Club Flat, 410 Marton Road, Middlesborough TS4 2PQ, owns a CPC464 with green screen and has loads of software. He wants to hear from any girls aged between 14 and 18 living in the United Kingdom. He would also like to hear from any user club in Middlesborough.

Simon Field, aged 14, of 7 Rosefield Avenue, Halesowen, West Midlands B62 9BU, would like to hear from other CPC6128 owners who are interested in swapping tape or disk games and ideas. He also wants to know if there is a user club in Birmingham.

Michael Mellin, aged 14, of 4 Camden Street, Nelson, Lancashire BB9 0BL, owns an Amstrad CPC464 and would like to hear from any boy or girl.

Peter Cheong, aged 15, of Apartment BLK 252, Ang Mo K10, Avenue 4, 03-211, Singapore 2056, is interested in programming, swapping games, and solving adventure problems. He likes both adventure and arcade games and would like to hear from anyone anywhere!

Jon Tyler, aged 16, of 26 Kensington Avenue, Thornton Heath, Surrey CR4 8BY, is interested in swapping tape games. He wants to hear from any CPC464 owners who are prepared to swap information and ideas.

Ashley Cotter-Cairns, aged 16, of 1 Langley Hill Close, Kings Langley, Herts WD4 9HB, wants to hear from other Amstrad owners interested in swapping such things as lists, tips and pokes.

Hayden Mallen, aged 13, owns a CPC464, and lives at 80 Richmond Drive, Perton, Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV6 7RP. He wants to hear from girls or boys aged 13 to 14.

Alfred Hughes, aged 18, of 21 Guisborough Road, Thornaby, Cleveland TS17 8EE, wants to hear from other owners of CPC464 machines.

William Freeland, aged 16, of 15 John Humble Street, Mayfield, Dalkeith, Midlothian EH22 5QZ, would like a French pen pal who can write English.

Paul Boyall, aged 16, of 12 Main Road, Hundleby, Spilsby, Lincs PE23 5LS, would like to hear from boys or girls of his age who own an Amstrad.

Eamon Murray, aged 16, of 169 Cappaghmore, Clondalkin, Dublin 22, Eire, owns a CPC464 is interested in all software. He would like to swap software, information, pokes etc.

Simon Martinez of 2 Wrenhill Close, Off Fernhill Drive, Liverpool L8 8LB, also owns a 464 micro. He likes adventures and arcade games and is interested in helping others with tips and pokes, and also receiving same.

Jonathan Boyd, aged 14, of 18 Rydal Street, Frizington, Cumbria CA26 3PY, is 14 years old and owns a CPC6128. He would like to hear from anyone.

Robert Shepherd lives at 4 Trusthorpe Road, Sutton-on-Sea, Lincs Ln12 2LT, would like to hear from anyone – from punks to Prime Ministers!

AMTIX! USER CLUB NEWS



NEWS FROM DOWN UNDER

It's nice to know AMTIX! is read and enjoyed at the other end of the world. I have just received a letter from Todd Dixon, who edits the monthly newsletter for the Eastern Amstrad Users Group in Auckland, New Zealand.

The club has only been going for a couple of months, but already it boasts a healthy membership figure. It meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month at Waka-Aranga Primary in Butley Drive, Pakuranga (Farm Cove), meetings kick off at 7.30pm promptly. The committee members are: Chairman, Graeme Ross; Secretary, Eric McCall; Treasurer, Matthew Crozier; Editor, Todd Dixon.

Anyone interested in joining the club can get further information by writing to the club at P O Box 6559, Wellesley Street, Auckland 1, New Zealand.

LETTER FROM ITALY

It's always nice to hear from readers who live abroad, and if they have problems it's even nicer to be able to help them. Recently I received a plea for help from Cristiano Dalvai who lives at Via Strada Provinciale per Vetriolo No 30, Levico terme (Trento) Italy 38056.

After reading issue 9 of AMTIX! he decided to send an international money order to Jeffrey Green's Advantage User Group and join his organisation. He sent off the money and then sat back and waited . . . and waited. After five weeks he decided to seek my help and wrote to me.

I spoke to Mr Green's wife who assured me that the matter would be investigated. She thinks the delay may have occurred because Cristiano forgot to include his address. Anyway let's hope that everything has now been resolved.

USER CLUB DIRECTORY

The User Club directory continues to grow at an alarming rate, thanks mainly to my friends Clint and Lesley at the Amstrad Group Federation who keep sending me listings which they have acquired. Even so I would welcome any more to add to the directory. Remember it will be published in every issue of AMTIX! Right – here we go with the latest listing.

AUSAMSNET, DONALD LEITH, 534 Albion Street, West Brunswick, Victoria 3055, Australia.

AMSTRAD CANTERBURY, MS CHRISTINE LINFOOT, PO Box 23.079 Templeton, Christchurch, New Zealand.

SOUTHSIDE AMSTRAD USERS CLUB, MS DEBBIE HOFFMAN PO Box 324, Bosnells 6110, Western Australia.

SINGAPORE AMSTRAD USERS CLUB, EDDIE GOH CHENG, B1K 216 Jurong, East Street, 21 04-523, SINGAPORE 2260.

COMMUNITY COMPUTING, Church of Ascension, Hulme Walk, Hulme, Manchester M15 5FQ.

AMSWEST AMSTRAD USER GROUP, MRS P T ARDRON, 6 Weston Street, Carlisle 6101, West Australia.

LE CLUB INFOMATIQUE, CHRISTOPHE WAROUX, BRUYSLEN LE CIB, 1 Rue Laterale 62470, Calonne Ricourart, Siege Social Bruay-en-Artois, France.

PATONS COMPUTER CLUB, P PATON, 176 Todmorden Road, Burnley, Lancashire BB11 3EU.

AMSTRAD USER SOFTWARE DATABASE, SIMON PORRITT, 13 Woodbine Avenue, Gosforth, Newcastle Upon Tyne NE3 4EU.

ELLESMERE PORT AMSTRAD USERS CLUB, MR M J DYOS, Ellesmere Port, South Wirral.

WACCI, JEFF WALKER, 75 Greenfields Drive, Hillingdon, Uxbridge, Middlesex UB8 3QN.

BMC, IAN BELL, 10 Morton Court, Blackwood, Scotland ML11 9YH.

ADVANTAGE COMPUTER USER GROUP, MR J GREEN, 33 Malyns Close, Chinnor, Oxfordshire OX9 4EW.

ASSOCIATION OF COMPUTER CLUBS, MR J S BONE, Club Spot 810, c/o Claremont Place, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear.

PCW USERS GROUP, MR R MOBBERLEY, 37 Clifford Bridge Road, Binley, Coventry CV3 2DW.

WEST MIDLANDS AMSTRAD USER GROUP, MR STUART WILLIAMS, 26 Matlock Road, Lower Farm Estate, Bloxwich, Walsall, West Midlands WS3 3QD.

BURNLEY CO-OP COMPUTER CLUB, MR DAVE CHAMBERS, 62 Moorland Road, Rosehill, Lancashire BB11 2NX.

THE NATIONAL INDEPENDENT AMSTRAD USER CLUB, MR DEREK VERNON, 1 The Middle Way, Harrow, Middlesex HA3 7E.

TAFFS WELL CO-OP COMPUTER CLUB, MR A TOGHILL, 45 Moy Road, Taffs Well, South Glamorgan.

LONDON AMSTRAD USER CLUB, Harrow Computer Group, Harrow Arts Centre, 356 High Road, Harrow Weald.

CROYDON MICROCOMPUTER CLUB, MR P CHICK, Central Reference Library, Catherine Street, Croydon.

SUTTON LIBRARY COMPUTER CLUB, MR D WILKINSON, Central Library, St Nicholas Way, Sutton.

NORTH KENT AMATEUR COMPUTER CLUB, MR D PETTET, Charles Darwin School, Jail Lane, Biggin Hill.

RICHMOND COMPUTER CLUB, MR B FORSTER, Richmond Adult College, Parkshot House, Richmond.

THANET CO-OP COMPUTER CLUB, MR M TEW, 21 Wellis Gardens, Westbrook, Margate, Kent CT9 5RG.

NEW PLYMOUTH AMSTRAD USER CLUB, Contact F G SOUSTER, 5 Taunton Place, New Plymouth, Ph 86501.

SOUTH AUCKLAND AUC, Contact J V BUCKTON, 14 Cockle Bay Road, Howick, Auckland, Ph 5346744.

AUCKLAND CENTRAL AMSTRAD USER GROUP, Contact MR S K AICKIN, Ph 864-002, Mr Dennis Siddens Ph 836-7583, Mr John Drummond Ph 836-8317, 27 Maryland Street, Point Chevalier, Auckland 2.

TOKOROA AMSTRAD USER'S CLUB, Contact STAN WALTON - Chairman, C/O 30 Benella Street, Tokoroa, Ph 65-491.

NORTH SHORE AMSTRAD USER'S CLUB, Contact CHRIS FRANCE, C/O The Computer Terminal, 257 Hinemoa Street, Birkenhead Auckland, Ph 419-0543 Wk, Ph 478-1762 A/H.

AMSTRAD CHRISTCHURCH, Contact CHRISTINE LINFOOT, Ph 897413, Ian Orchard, Ph 524-064, P O Box 24174, East Linwood, Christchurch.

CHORLEY COMPUTER CLUB, MR J MOORE, 3 Stanley Road, Farington, Preston, PR5 2RH.

WAKEFIELD AMATEUR COMPUTER CLUB, MR R QUARTON, 44 Whitley Spring Crescent, Ossett, West Yorkshire, WF5 0RE.

HUNTINGDONSHIRE COMPUTER CLUB, MR J CHILDS, 57 Manor Gardens, Buckden, Huntingdon, Cambs, PE18 9TW.

CONGLETON AND DISTRICT COMPUTER CLUB, MR G A HARRATT, 19 Walgrave Close, Congleton, Cheshire, CW12 4TS.

MICROBEACON SUPPORTERS GROUP, MR J PALMER, Microbeacon Project, 29 Guthrie Street, Edinburgh, Scotland.

PRESTON COMPUTER CLUB (PACE), MR L HOWARTH, 41 St Walburge Avenue, Preston, Lancs, PR2 2QT.

WEST HERTS 80 USERS ASSOCIATION, MR B LARKIN, 82 Church Street, Lighton Buzzard, Beds, LU7 7BT.

AMSTRAD CLUB SCHWEIZ, Kurt in-Albon, Muhlackern, CH-3931, Eggerberg, Switzerland.

COTAC CLUB, The Secretary, MR CONRAD HART, 48 Dover Road, Room 14, Wanstead, London, E12 5EA.

WESTERN SUBURBS AMSTRAD USERS GROUP, The Secretary, MR J JAMES, 36 Penong Street, Westlake, Brisbane 4074, Australia.

SYNTAX ERROR COMPUTER CLUB NORDHORN, (ALL COMPUTERS), Contact: FRED WEBER, Laarstrabe 23, 4460 Nordhorn, Tel: 059-21-13149, Germany.

CPC CLUBGRUNDUNG ANGESTREBT, Contact: KREIS BORKEN.

AMSTRAD NORTH WEST USER CLUB (ANWUC), 2 Stovell Avenue, Longsight, Manchester 12.

BURNLEY CO-OP COMPUTER CLUB, MR DAVE CHAMBERS, 62 Moorland Road, Rosehill, Lancashire, BB11 2NX.

THANET CO-OP COMPUTER CLUB, MR M TEW, 21 Wellis Gardens, Westbrook, Margate, Kent, CT9 5RG.

COMMUNITY COMPUTING, Church of Ascension, Hulme, Manchester, M15 5FQ.

MRS P T ARDRON, AMSWEST AMSTRAD USER GROUP, 6 Weston Street, Carlisle, 6101, West Australia.

M. CHRISTOPHE WAROUX, LE CLUB INFORMATIQUE BRUYSLEN, 1 Rue Laterale, 62470 Calonne Ricourart, Siege social, Bruay-en-Artois, France.

SCHNEIDER-JOYCE-ANWENDERKREIS, Munster/Coesfeld sucht Mitglieder, Wolfgang Kurch, 4405 Nottuln, Germany.

CLUBRUNGDUNG, im Raum Hanau-Gelnhusen, Richard Luppert, Gartenstrasse 18, 6456 Langenselbold, Germany.

SCHNEIDER-JOYCE USER CLUB, Rhein-Main, A-Reichweinweg 6, 6097 Trebur 3, Germany.

SCHNEIDER CPC CLUB BAYREUTH UND BAYREUTHER COMPUTERS CLUB, MARCO KONARD, Fontanestrasse 4, 8580 Bayreuth, Germany.

HUDDERSFIELD CO-OP COMPUTER CLUB, MR D POWELL, 35 Foxroyed Drive, Mirfield, Huddersfield.

COTAC CLUB, The Secretary, MR CONRAD HART, 48 Dover Road, Room 14, Wanstead, London E12 5EA.

AMSTRAD GROUPS FEDERATION, The Secretary, MR P CLARKE 4 Sutton Road, Gorton, Manchester M18 7PN. Tel 061-256-2679.

ROCKINGHAM-KWINANA AMSTRAD COMPUTER CLUB, The Secretary, MR K SAW, 29 Millgrove Avenue, Cooloongup, Western Australia WA 6168.

AMSTRAD COMPUTER CLUB INC (SA), The President, MR C SOWDEN, P O Box 210, Parkholme 5043, South Australia.

VICTORIA WESTERN COMPUTER CLUB, The Secretary, P O Box 42, Braybrook 3019, Western Australia.

EASTERN AMSTRAD USER GROUP, The Secretary, BARRY FREDRICKSON, P O Box 279, Heidelberg Vic 3084, Australia.

EASTERN AMSTRAD USERS GROUP, Editor, TODD DIXON, C/O PO Box 6559, Wellesley Street, Auckland 1, New Zealand.

WAGGA WAGGA AMSTRAD USER GROUP, The Secretary, MR J D TIPPER, 36 Wills Place, Kapooka, NSW 2661, Australia.

PORT MACQUARIE AMSTRAD USERS GROUP, The Secretary, CRAIG TOLLIS, P O Box 584, Port Macquarie 2444, Australia.

SCHNEIDER-JOYCE-ANWENDERKREIS, Munster/Coesfeld sucht Mitglieder Contact: WOLFGANG KURCH, 4405 Nottuln Tel: 0 25 02/1540, Germany.

CPC USER CLUB - Grundung, Contact: SVEN MARTIN Obstreubenstrasse 3 3590, Bad Wildungen, Germany.

ROMSOFT CPC CLUB, MICHAEL GEORGE, Waldstrasse 13 6630 Saarlouis 5 Tel: 0 6831 6701, Germany.

AMSTRAD CLUB SCHWEIZ, Kurt In-Albon, Muhlackern CH-3931, Eggerberg, Switzerland.

FREAK-SOFT-CLUB CPC 464, RALF HOPPERDIETZEL Theodor-Storm-Strasse 22 8670 Hof (Saale), Germany.

FREAK-SOFT-CLUB CPC 664, CPC 6128, MICHAEL ECKERT, Zobelsreuther Strasse 30 8670 (Saale), Germany.

CLUBRUNDUNG Im Raum Hanau-Gelnhausen, RICHARD LUPPERT Gartenstrasse 18, 6456 Langenselbold, Germany.

SCHNEIDER-JOYCE USER CLUB, RHEIN-MAIN A-Reichweinweg 6 6097, Trebur 3, Germany.

CPC CLUB BORKEN, KARSTEN KAMMLER, Heinrich-Hertz-Strasse 4 4280 Borken-Gemen, Germany.

6128-UND 664- BESITZER, MICHAEL DECKER, Im Richelnberg 36 5166 Kreuzau, Germany.

CPC USER CLUB LAATZEN, Contact: ROLF MENN, Am Kamp 29 3014 Laatzen 1, Germany.

S C C N-H-W-N-H-W SCHNEIDER COMPUTER CLUB, OLIVER THIELE, Am Kirchweg 49, 5908 Neunkirchen 5, Germany.

S C C H SCHNEIDER COMPUTER CLUB HAMBURG, ALEXANDER SCHARF Heimfelder Strasse 60, 2100 Hamburg 90, Germany.

CPC-USER-CLUB SCHWEIZ, KLAUS-DIETER PREISS, Im Hof 20 CH-8637, Laupen, Switzerland.

JOYCE COMPUTER CLUB, MICOLAI WALTER Postfach 1269 6242 Kronberg/Ts, Germany.

INTER-MEDIA-CLUB SCHWEIZ IMC, SCHNEIDER CPC-CLUB, URS THONY PASCH CH-7214, Grusch, Switzerland.

CPC-USER-CLUB-VOGELSANG, PETER WIESCHER, Kasernenstrasse 9, D-5140 Erkelenz-4, Germany.

CPC 464 CLUB GRUNDUNG, Contact HEINZ ELBERS, Wurttemberger Strasse 1 4460 Nordhorn Germany.

SCHNEIDER COMPUTER CLUB E V, Postfach 1101, 4972 Lohne 1, Germany.



WARGAMERS UNITE!

BY OWEN AND AUDREY BISHOP

A few years ago, a visitor to a wargaming event would have looked hard (and in vain) to find a computer on any of the stands. At the same time, a visitor to a computer show would have been lucky to see two decent wargames on display. Have things improved since then? On one side of the gap there are signs of change, as computers slowly but surely move into table and board wargaming. The programs used however are not of the kind we review on these pages. They are written to be used as wargaming aids – holding an immense store of data and taking on the burden of the mathematical side of resolving combat.

A first class example of this kind is the *AFV Combat Calculator* by David Bodger and Robin Hunt. Using this you can set up almost any armoured battle of the WW2 period. You can arm your AFVs (armoured fighting vehicles) with a wide range of weapons, thus recreating almost all of the weapons systems used by the warring nations of that period. The program accurately takes into account all the factors connected with armour (thickness positioning among others), weapon type, shell type, range, visibility, and the like. No graphic displays – that's on the table, in full colour and in 3D! AFV is available for the Spectrum and BBC only at present, but a new system is on its way, and it's promised for the Amstrad and CBM64 too.

The latest news to reach us from 'down under' indicates that computers are getting rather more attention from wargamers there than they are here. The New Zealand Wargamers National Convention, being held at Easter in Christchurch, will have two full days devoted to computer wargaming. We'll be there to report to you on this event. Now, what of the other side of the gap? Yes, the software houses have been letting us have more wargames. A few of these are even top-ranking in the current state of the art. But what state is the art in?

In this connection we are of course assuming that you want to play the whole game on the Computer. The poor old Arnold has to take the place of a table at least two metres square, covered with undulating and varied terrain, and peopled by hundreds of figures and vehicles of dozens of different types. It has to contain the rulebook which, for an average wargame, consists of about thirty pages of closely printed text and includes up to twenty combat resolution tables just for the rules. You get another booklet of similar size for historical background. On top of all this, the micro has to do all the maths, keep a record of the state of play, and even do its feeble best to produce realistic sound effects (something that makes many wargamers shudder). Finally it is expected to act as a human opponent, playing a game that is hundreds of times more complex than Chess – and do it quickly! Can the Arnold cope with all this? The answer is NO.

Are we crossing the gap from the wrong side? Are the software houses (and the software buyers, who control what the houses produce) heading in the wrong direction? A computer wargame can't have everything, so what do we cut out or cut down on, to squeeze it into today's popular computer? Do we simplify the graphics? Do we forget about computer-play? Do we eliminate sound effects? Do we give up the attempt to get realistic combat resolution? Whatever we do, it's all a matter of memory size.

This is where we would like to hear from you (please write your letters on the back of a cheque for £1000 made payable to 'Kray Twins' Computers, Mile End road, London!). We have some views of our own on the subject, which you may agree with but are welcome to tear to shreds (in this case, better make the cheque out for £1500). No, joking apart - PLEASE write care of AMTIX! Towers - any old scrap of paper will do.

One of the problems about computer wargaming is that a very high standard of graphics has become obligatory in Arcade games. Something that is essentially an arcade game may be given 'added strategic elements' and then marketed as a wargame. A few simple strategic routines can easily be fitted into some spare memory space, but this does not make it a strategic game – especially when compared with the average board wargame. Although you may have 'smooth' graphics, the terrain area of a typical computer wargame is still less than a quarter of the average board wargame. Do we need graphics at all? Why not a text-only wargame, as we have in the more challenging kind of adventure game? A map might be needed for play, but a printed one could be supplied along with the tape or disk. You would then be in exactly the same position as any field commander (luckier than many in past battles, who have either had no map or been issued with the wrong one!). But, if we insist that we really must have graphics, we can surely manage with something fairly simple. Elaborate graphics routines use up an awful lot of memory which would be better devoted to the real essentials of the game. These are the calculations and decisions that go on unseen in the innards of the computer. These make up the real game which, after all, is what wargaming is about. To add even a small improvement to graphics, or to the computer-play routines, may mean stripping out a lot (sometimes nearly all) of the interesting playing features of a game.

Computer-play, in which you pit your wits against the tactical skill(???) of the computer is another hang-over from Arcade games. Another memory-grabber, it is something we need like a hole in the armour-plating. If you really haven't any friends available, you can play for both sides yourself. Computer-play routines usually work by stacking the odds heavily against you, by playing so fast you can not follow what is happening, or sometimes, we suspect, by downright cheating. Worse still, within the limitations of its program, the computer is a relentless foe, who never makes a mistake or takes an unwise decision – how boring! Human opponents have a personality, they sometimes take brilliant advantage of you, while at other times they can make stupid mistakes. Though human opponents often have favourite tactics which they like to repeat, they can also be very unpredictable, they may try to mislead you – or may even panic and run. Do real-life generals ever do battle against a computer? Even with all the technology of modern warfare, and the vast computing power available to control it, essential decisions are still taken by human opponents.

We could say more along these lines but this should be enough to get you writing. To sum up, we believe that as long as wargames are seen as a sort of thinking person's arcade game, the priorities will still be all wrong. We shall finish up with games that people will soon tire of, and which will make no impact at all on the majority of wargamers. We need to work the other way – from the wargame on the board or table to the wargame on the computer. Only then shall we get really lasting, authentic, challenging games to appeal to all kinds of wargamer. Over to you!

Next month – Tac-Tips No 1. Be up-front with the best commanders.


WIN
A TOSHIBA GHETT
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30 HEWSON CALENDARS ON OFFER!!
50 Copies of *IMPOSSABALL* ready to take away

O-BLASTER
EQUALISER



The game that I'm playing at the moment is IMPOSSABALL from HEWSONS, in which you control a BALL that BOUNCES along a scrolling corridor which has columns suspended from the CEILING and protruding from the ground. Your task is simply to guide the ball against the protruding face of the columns in order to force them either into the floor or ceiling - all this whilst trying to avoid the SPIKES which surround them.

Find all the words hidden in the wordsquare that are in capital letters in this piece (except for the address and headlines of course!), and you could win yourself a GHETTO BLASTER. If you don't win the first prize then there's thirty **Hewsons** calendars, and fifty copies of the game to keep the runners-up happy and contented.

Just send your entries to **IMPOSSABALL MISSION, AMTIX Towers, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB.** Making sure that they arrive here before the 5th of March.

P	L	B	A	L	L	M	P	T	S	L	I
M	T	Q	P	R	E	T	S	A	L	B	F
J	L	P	Y	N	I	P	W	A	S	L	P
F	S	E	C	N	U	O	B	Q	M	T	P
T	Y	I	L	E	D	A	F	M	N	D	T
S	R	H	E	W	S	O	N	S	Q	F	L
W	D	A	N	S	I	P	M	L	O	F	T
S	D	Q	O	E	Y	D	I	W	T	N	L
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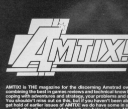
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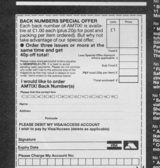
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* Battle of the Chess Giants * The world of PSS * A transatlantic interview with Infocom (pt 1) * Reviews of Rainbird's Music System and the Melbourne Draw * Competition winners.

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No 9 July 1986

* Maps of Movie and Nomad * How to beef up your Joyce for £20! * A review of Laser Genius * Competition winners galore.

No 10 August 1986

* Budget Special * Maps of Heavy on the Magick and Cauldron 11 * A visit to Level 9 * Spoilt for Joyce including a review of Money Maker * Lots more competition winners.

No 11 September 1986

* Maps of Fairlight, Saboteur and Movie * The ultimate Joyce supplement including games reviews, a dust cover offer, typing tutorials and a chess comparison * Reviews of Promerge, a Silicon Disk Drive, a Miditrack and a Drumkit * The arrival of Lee Paddon, Richard Eddy, Tony Clarke and Saffron Trevaskis * The NEW look LOGO unveiled * The first brolly induced OTS * The new look reviews * Even more winners

No 12 October 1986

* First issue with new logo! * Tir Na Nog offer! * On The Spot with Saffron * Mega Adventures reviewed! * Mirage Imager! * Fanzines Explored! * Mapped Starquake, Jack the Nipper and Tir Na Nog * Short Story * First Challenge * Terminal Man * More winners!!

No 13 November 1986

* Saffron revealed! * Accolades for Revolution, Tomahawk, Trivial Pursuits * Saffron's Scoreboard! * Delta 4 Profile * PCW Show * Art Studio and Multiface 2 - Screwdriven! * Ricardo Pinto - Interviewed! * Tony wins a challenge * Mapped Doomdark's Revenge and Equinox * Winners and Fun, fun, fun!

No 14 December 1986

* Accolades for The Eidolon, Trailblazer, Scooby Doo, Xeno, Ikari Warriors, The AMTIX! Accolades * The Amstrad Show * Richard loses his challenge * Mapped Dan Dare, Panzadrome * Competitions galore * A Look at the new magazine, LM * Yet more winners

No 15 January 1987

* Accolades for Heartland, Zombi, Thanatos The Destroyer, and Bobby Bearing in our Mega Christmas special * Mapped Eidolon, Druid and Glider Rider * Issue 0 of the new magazine, LM * The Newsfield joystick junkies inter title mega fight * Enough competitions to blow your mind!

THE AMSTRAD ROCK AND ROLL SHOW

Our own Crumbly editor, MALCOLM HARDING, led the team to the sixth Amstrad Show. Here's his report on the three day event.

Visitors to the first Amstrad Show of 1987, held at the Novotel in London's Hammersmith, had no trouble finding the AMTIX! stand – even though it had been tucked away in a corner by the organisers (because of space problems). From the start we decided we would adopt a musical theme for the show, and it certainly paid off, as visitors frequently came to the stand to see from where the sound of games music and hit records was coming. One woman summed up the success of the exercise when she came to the stand "to see where the music was coming from."

As is now the norm, there was a definite lack of software companies at the show. Perhaps they feel that the Amstrad games market is dying, but that did not appear to be the case as we were concerned, and the games on our CPC6128 were in almost constant use by visitors. We even decided to hold our monthly challenge at the show. With the aid of a **Joycon** adaptor, which enabled two players to use joysticks, the challenge was thrown down for *Gauntlet* and an exciting game ensued between two visitors, with Richard, Mass and Tony being able to relax for a change. The only company showing off new games was **CDS Software/Blue Ribbon Software, who were showing off *Brian Clough's Football Fortunes*, available for the CPC and PCW range of computers, and *Steve Davis Snooker*, including pools and billiards, for the PCW micros. The Brian Clough computer assisted board game is reviewed on page 90 of this issue.**

There were no less than 160 stands, and almost every one of them was selling programs and utilities for either the PCW8256/8512 or PC 1512 micros. As in previous show reports I shall run through some of the stands at the show, but in no particular order of preference.

The staff at the London based Caxton Software Company were showing a load of software for the PC1512. Some was familiar, but others (such as the new versions of *Condor* and *ScratchPad Plus*) were new. Also new was a great idea in time management – the powerful *TimeKeeper*. Nearby **Saxon Computing**, who are based at Humberside, were demonstrating their best-selling packages, *Micro Collection* for the PCW8256 and 8512 and *Flexi-Collection* for the PC1512. Both collections had five programs, database, word processor with mail merge, a labelling program, and a spreadsheet. The PC versions also had graphics built into the spreadsheet, and the word processor had the ability to merge print picture files created by programs such as *PC-Paint*, *Lotus 123*, and *VP-Planner*.

Database Software were offering their latest utility, *PlanIt*. This is a complete personal organiser for both the PCW and CPC range of Amstrads. It contains three programs – personal accounts, which give complete control of even the most wayward bank account; a financial diary to keep track of monies and expenses owed to you; and a card index system. They were also pushing Britain's fastest growing electronic mail service, *Microlink*, which provides a user interface to **Telecom Gold**, but includes lots of extra services such as *WeatherLink* and *FloraLink*. They were boasting their latest breakthrough, namely a direct satellite link to the USA via **Mnematics** in New York.

A host of smiling faces on the Romantic Robot stand at the show.

MODEMS GALORE

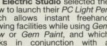
Pace Micro Technology have a stand at every Amstrad Show and are renowned for their modem. They first entered the communications field with the *Nightingale* modem, now sold as the Amstrad V2123. Their latest peripherals were the *Commstar CPC* and the *Pace RS232* interface. The company was showing off its range of *Series Four* modems, and the launch of the *Linnet* modem coincided with the show. **Kuma Computers** used the show to launch the new range of professional **Gem** based business software for the PC1512. The first packages released are the *K-Spread 2* spread sheet calculator, and *K-Graph 2* business graphics. These are the first two in a series of data compatible programs under development, and will be supported in the near future by the release of *K-Word*, *K-Comm 2*, and *K-Data*.

A Bradford company, **Initiator**, were demonstrating the latest version of their software package, *Label Printer*, which gives a creation, storage, and print facility for the PCW8256. The *Amstand*, a versatile stand for supporting the PC machines, was also on show. It acts as a wall mounted unit and makes effective use of office space. **Cornix Software**, who were on stand 27, claimed to have come up with programs for people who use a computer system as a means to an end, and not as an end in itself. Their *Cornix* packages are written for the small business which wishes to improve efficiency and profitability rather than its computing skills. They were launching *Product Costing* and *Job Estimating* at the show, useful upgrades to their existing *Simple Accounts* and *Card Index*, which have already been well received by the public.

Minerva Systems were doing a roaring trade with their business software, hardly surprising because it was being sold at just £25! On offer was a the newly launched learner friendly service series, including the *First Base* database, *First Calc* spreadsheet, *Lernico* (the tutorial for *Locoscript* writers), and *Typerite*, a typing tutorial. **MML Systems**, of London, have developed *Straight Talk*, a new product for the 1512. It is an easy, powerful communications program for electronic mail and telex, and includes a text processor for the preparation of both Ascii and telex documents. An interesting product caught our eyes on the **Kado Enterprises** stand. It is a product called *Seal 'n Type*, made from clear flexible plastic, and a removable cover which fits snugly over the keys of your 8256 or 8512 keyboard, protecting it from dust and accidental spillage of liquids, yet still allows you to type with ease and safety. We were given a sample and intend trying it in AMTIX! Towers. We'll let you know how it performs.

Birkenhead based **Overbase**, continue to enjoy success with their *Thingi*, which is designed to hold single sheets or pad paper on the side of your Joyce. It is also available for VDUs and telex terminals. Perhaps they would like to send us one to review? **LCL Educational Software** have jumped on the Joyce bandwagon bringing out a 8256 and 8512 version of *Micro English*. They were also showing off *Micro Maths* for both CPC and PCW machines. **KDS Electronics** were showing a large range of hardware for the CPC machines, ranging from a *CPC Serial interface with Comms*, to a *Communicator 104 modem* with full eight colour Prestel and downloader. For the PCW range there were the *RS* and *Centronics* interfaces, and a new *Chatterbox modem*. **Tasman** were displaying new and existing products for all Amstrad computers including the PC range.

LIGHT PEN FOR THE PC1512



The Electric Studio selected the show to launch their *PC Light Pen* which allows instant freehand drawing facilities while using *Gem Draw* or *Gem Paint*, and which works in conjunction with a mouse. They were also demonstrating the *PCW Video Digitiser*, *CPC6128 Video Digitiser* and the *PCW Mouse* and *Light Pen*. Also on show was *Snip Art*, a collection of digitised images suitable for graphics usage on the PCW.

Zanin Electronics of Surrey were selling *A-B-C*, a package for the PC1512 containing everything you need to take care of paperwork in any small business, no matter what the trade. It allows you to type letters, and quotations, file information (and find it again), perform calculations, and do bookkeeping (including VAT Return and Balance Sheet). The focus of attention on the **Precision Software** stand was the launch of *Superbase* for the PC machines. It is designed to take maximum advantage of *Gem* and is a powerful relational multi-file database. It also includes unique facilities for co-ordinating graphic and visual images with record data to form a picture database. Gwynedd ▶

THE AMSTRAD SHOW

based **Cambrian Software**, have also jumped on the PC bandwagon and were demonstrating their latest version of *Cambase financial manager and payroll*. **Compact Software** were selling their own range of business accounting software for both the PCW and PC range.

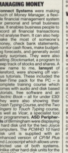
Sandpiper Software concentrate on writing business software and database management systems for the PCW and PC machines. The recently released *Sandpiper File Manager* contains enhancements previously found in only far more expensive programs, and is an easy to use interactive programmable database system that allows you to customise a diverse range of applications. *Sandpiper Accounts* is a simplified integrated accounting system that can handle sales, purchase, and nominal ledgers. The company also produces its own *Stock Control and Payroll* packages. **Sagesoft** were concentrating on a range of 16 Bit PC software. Their *Business Wise* software range includes *Bookkeeper, Accountant, Payroll, Chit-Chat, Retrieve, Desk Set* and *Planner*. They were also showing their *Popular* range of business software for the PCW81256 and 8512 machines.

On stand 72, visitors were able to see the **Timatic System's** twenty megabyte drive. This system is now supplied with the new version of CPM and *Locoscript*, especially written by **Locomotive** to drive Winchester disks. This means the Web Hard Disk is now 100% software compatible with all current software running on the Joyce and fat Joyce computers. London based **Vidix** were selling their new *Vidix Transporter* for the PCW8256 and 8512 micros. It holds everything in complete safety including; the monitor, keyboard and printer, cables and the manual (it even has a pocket for disks). **Glentop Press** of Barnet had a wide range of books on sale for the Amstrad micros. Of particular interest to visitors was the new range of books for the PC1512 range, from an easy to read introduction of this IBM compatible micro, to texts covering **GEM** based software available for the machine. **Bourne Education and Training** had a wide range of educational programs available for the CPC and PCW machines and also for the PC1512 range.



Richard (left) and Massimo are too modest to look at the camera. Most unusual.

Grafsales showed off one of the lowest priced yet powerful *2D CAD* packages known – the *H Grafpad 3*. This is an A4 sized digitizer tablet which operates with the PCW8256 and 8512 and PC1512 machines, with costs ranging from £149.50 to £195.50. It comes complete with powercard software configured to operate for PCs with the *EGA, CGA,* or *Hercule* graphics cards and the PC1512 computer. It includes a selection of drawing units in either imperial or metric. Automatic dimensioning and unlimited zooming are easily achieved, as are panning and freehand drawing. Library storage for user defined symbols is catered for within the software, and drawing can be done to absolute, relative or polar co-ordinates. Printer/Plotter interfaces are a standard part of the overall package, and output can be from A5 to A0 sizes.



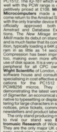
MANAGING MONEY

Connect Systems were making much of *Money Manager*, a flexible financial management system for personal and small business use. It enables business people to record all financial transactions and analyse them. It can also help make the most of someone's money, check bank statements, monitor cash flows, make budgeting forecasts, and generally avoid nasty surprises. They were also selling *Stockmarket*, a program to keep track of stocks and shares. A new name to me, **Iansyst** of Hereford, were showing off various tutorials. These included the *Reel-Time* pack for the PC – a complete training course which comes with audio and disk based tutorials, free software and an *Electric Book* – all for under £30! They were also showing their *Crash Typing Course*, and the *Two Fingers to Touch Typing* course, as well as *Vicar*, a specialist tool for programmers. **ASD Peripherals** of Birmingham were displaying a hard disk unit for the two Joyce computers. The *PCWHD 10* hard disk unit is supplied with an enhanced version of *CP/M Plus* and *Locoscript* which allows unrestricted use of both systems. Unlike other hard disk units for the PCW8000, the software drivers are resident in the operating system allowing even the most sophisticated software packages to operate faster and more efficiently. They also had on display a network system for the PC compatible hard disk kits.

Cavalier Software only started producing products for the PCW range of micros a year ago. The Dartford based company were showing off a powerful contact analyser, *Teleadd*, and also their unique package, *Contract Accounting*. My friends from **Advantage** are now authorised dealers for the US based **PC-Software Interest Group** and can supply over 3,000 tested and supported MSDOS programs from £7.95 per disk. They have not neglected the CPC and PCW owners, having utilities, applications and games compilation disks from only £5.95. They were also offering the popular *Volkswriter* full feature word processor, and MIX C compiler at special show prices. **Alfa Electronics** of Surbiton launched two products at the show, *Screenfilters* and *New Paper Tray*. *Screenfilters* consists of a rectangular frame which matches the screen size and colour of the monitor. Filters are made from micro mesh which increases the quality of the screen display, and are available for CPC and PCW (mono and colour). The *New Paper Tray* for the PCW printer has adjustable left and right guides. It makes single sheet loading as easy as child's play, and aligns the sheet correctly where you want it – every time.

WORKSTATIONS

Intelligence Quotient of Romford, was showing off its IQ ergonomically advanced workstations. The new *IQ-161P* at £168, was specially designed for the PC1512. The *IQ-161* which works well with the PCW range is competitively priced at £108. **Mirage Microcomputers** made a welcome return to the Amstrad Show, with the only transfer device that is officially approved both by Amstrad and Database Exhibitions. The *New Mirage Imager MkIII* made its debut on stand 145 and is much faster that its competition, typically loading a 64K program in as little as 14 seconds! Compression has been improved too, making even more efficient use of disk space. It is a very useful peripheral for all CPC owners.



Wight Scientific of London, are a software house and consultancy specialising in cost effective applications for the PC1512 and PCW8256 micros. They were demonstrating the latest versions of *Signwriter*, an economical alternative to typesetting or display lettering for large characters in signs, notices, price tickets, community newsletters and product labels.

The only stand producing music to rival our stand was **Electromusic Research** of Wickford. They are the only major UK company producing computer music software and hardware for computers and midi-equipped musical instruments. The EMR's *Miditrack Music System* for home computers offers more music control programs than any current midi system, and is approved for use with any midi equipped instrument. Software includes multi-track recording *Realtime Performer* and *Steptime Composer*, the comprehensive *Music Editor* for editing/linking, *Vumusic* for unique graphics, and *instrument Voice Editors* and *Notators* to print music.

We now have a a few months break before the next Amstrad Show takes place in July, once again in London, but this time being held at Alexandra Palace. Hope to see you there!

The *Rainbird* G·A·L·L·E·R·Y

Computer art masterpieces keep flooding into AMTIX! Towers, and we're always looking for more. Every picture that finally makes its way into the hallowed Rainbird Gallery will be turned into an A3 colour screen dump by Dimension Graphics and framed, courtesy of Rainbird, before being sent to its creator as a momento. Here are five more acclaimed works to feast your eyes on, and as always our resident art critic passes comment . . .

Entries for the gallery should be sent on cassette or disk to: The Rainbird Gallery, AMTIX!, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.

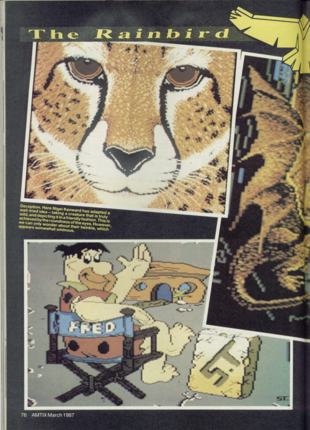
This month Steven Tate of Milton Keynes makes a re-appearance, and it's first time round for Rat Singh (unfortunately your address has been mislaid, Rat, so drop us a line . . .). Nigel Kenward, that well-known realist from Leicester, is the man with a passion for wildlife.



Singh's representation of Alan Moore's 2000 AD characters DR and Quinch. Note the powerful swing of the futuristic vehicle as it smashes into the foreground, breaking up the peculiar construction of the picture.

An original creation. Singh shows a passion for pure fantasy with his depiction of the fictional hero of Elric. It illustrates the eternal fight between good and evil, and although we can rest assured that good will finally win, we are puzzled by the sharp black shadows in the foreground.

The Rainbird



Deception. Here Nigel Kenward has adapted a well-tried idea – taking a creature that is truly wild, and depicting it in a friendly fashion. This is achieved by the roundness of the eyes. However, we can only wonder about their twinkle, which appears somewhat ominous.



Last month Tate showed his passion for Gothic illustration, which he once again echoes by the creation of this mythical dragon. The central character is shifted to the right-hand side making full use of the golden section. The black shape in the background is distinctly forbidding, but we are left wondering what it actually houses.

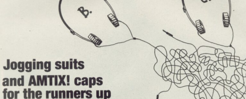
With this cartoon illustration, Tate shows his versatility. Note the openness of the picture – we are immediately drawn in to view Fred's home by the friendliness implicit on his face and are welcomed with a flourish of the hand.

The first section of a two part competition . . .

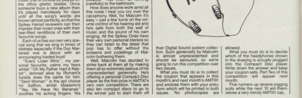
MALCOLM A OFFER YOU THE

A PERSONAL COMPACT DISC

. . . With ten compact discs with which to begin you



Jogging suits and AMTIX! caps for the runners up



Here at AMTIX! Towers there is no-one who has not been subjected to the pulsating sound of the loud music that is constantly played on the office ghetto blaster. Once someone buys a new album then it's played mercilessly for days until all the song's words are known almost perfectly, so that the Spikey Haired reviewers can then impress their loved ones with their tear-filled renditions of their own favourite songs.

Each of us has our own very special song that we sing in times of distress especially if the Doc Martened one is about with an encouraging loaded boot!

"Every Loser Wins", my personal favourite, calms my fears whilst "Oh My Father Had A Rabbit", skinned alive by Richard's tonsils does the same for him. "Devil Woman" is the apt choice for Saffron, whilst Massimo's "Yes, We Have No Bananas" soothes his aching fingers. Yes they all like a good song in times of trouble but it is Malcolm's personal favourite of "The First Cut Is The Deepest" has them all running (carefully) to the bathroom.

How does anyone work amid all this noise I hear you cry over the cacophony. Well, for Malcolm it's easy – just a few turns on the volume control of his hearing aid and he's safe from both the wall of music and the sound of his own singing. All the Spikey Ones have their very own personal stereos so they can listen to the latest that pop has to offer without the screams and yodellings of Malcolm bothering them.

Well, Malcolm has decided to strike back at them all by making them all so extremely jealous of his unprecedented generosity. He's offering a personal Compact Disc player as the first prize in AMTIX!'s very own competition. There are also ten compact discs to go to the winner just to start them off their Digital Sound system collection. Such generosity by Malcolm is almost unprecedented and should be savoured, so we're going to run this competition over two issues.

What you must do is to collect the coupon that appears in this month's and next month's AMTIX! and enclose them with your entry form which will be printed in both issues. No photocopies are allowed.

What you must do is to decide which of the headphones shown in the drawing is actually plugged into the Compact Disc player. Write down the answer and keep your coupon safe. Part Two of this competition will appear next month.

Five runners up receive jogging suits while the next 10 win themselves a very trendy AMTIX! cap.


M AND AMTIX!
THE CHANCE TO WIN
SC PLAYER . . .
n your CD collection
AMTIX!
COMPETITION
D.
E.
THE EVER SO GENEROUS COMPACT DISC PLAYER AND CD DISCS COMPETITION, PART ONE:
ANSWER
AMTIX!
COMPACT DISC COMPETITION
Coupon One
Name
Address
Post Code
MY JOGGING SUIT SIZE IS
(S, M or L)

JAIL BREAK

Konami, £8.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick or keys

For some time now, **Konami** games have been released under the **Imagine** label. With the beginning of a new year however, the coin-op specialists have opted to produce under their own label, which will feature conversions from their major machines. The first of these to grace the Amstrad is the popular *Jail Break*. It tells the story of a disastrous prison escape, in which the prisoners have taken the Warden captive and now wander the streets taking members of the public hostage. Taking the role of a policeman you progress though five different settings, avoiding the onslaught of killer prisoners – eventually aiming to release the warden and the hostages.

Jail Break is a horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up, with the policeman having the ability to move in four different directions; up, down, left and right. Initially his only weapon is a rapid-firing pistol, but more powerful armaments are acquired once captives have been freed. Escaped convicts move on screen from either the left or right, and are armed with either a pistol or tear-gas bombs. One of your five lives is lost If one of the prisoners scores a hit against you. Two-hundred points are awarded for each prisoner shot, with the present score and high-score shown at the top of the screen.

There are five different hostages to be freed, each with a different points value – Men are worth 500, Women 1,000, Children 2,000, Women in the Window 5,000 and finally the Warden himself worth 50,000. The Warden only shows up at the very end, but the others appear throughout the game. Men, women and children are found running along the roads or rapidly across the road, they are impossible to pass – and must therefore be destroyed (the tear-gas bombs are the only effective weapon in this case). On completion of a location, the scrolling automatically stops, and it's on to the next setting.

standing still and waving their arms. They are saved by simply moving into them. On freeing the first hostage, you are given the use of a rocket gun which is accessed by pressing the space bar. This weapon is used to destroy barrels in the road and the trash vans (worth 400 points) which the prisoners have hi-jacked and are using against you. Freeing another hostage allows the use of a tear-gas bomb launcher – accessed by pressing the space bar twice. If a hostage is accidentally shot, these extra weapons are lost and can only be regained by saving more captives. The weapons made available to you and the number of lives left are shown at the bottom left and right of the screen respectively.

The action takes place over five different settings. The first of these places the cop deep within the city streets against a background of buildings. Here, as well as freeing the many hostages, he must shoot or avoid the oncoming prisoners. Towards the end of this location stationary prisoners with machine guns enter the fray. Shooting

The second location is the city park with grass lands, trees, fencing and narrow pathways. As well as containing all the dangers of the previous level, the park holds a new threat for the heroic policeman. Convicts have found their way into the city's drainage system and pop up from man-hole covers to take pot shots at him.

The final location is the prison itself. The prisoners are still in occupation, only now in greater numbers. The Warden is situated at the very end of this level, tied to a post in the middle of the exercise yard. He is saved by the same method used for saving the other hostages, but to accidentally shoot him causes a loss of one life and the repositioning of the policeman to half-way along that location. When the Warden is once again safe in the hands of the law the program resets and you find yourself back at the start of the first level.

Anthony — CRITICISM

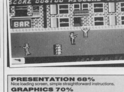
The games scene may improve now that Konami are doing their own conversions to the Amstrad, but judging from this they still have a long way to go. The graphics, although jerky, are well defined and the scrolling background is also quite passable. Generally, I found it quite appealing, this kind of mindless violence can be quite good when executed correctly. It's nice to see a game where different weapons have differing effects, adding a little strategy to the game. On the whole an average conversion of a game that had limited appeal in the Arcades.

Richard — CRITICISM

For a first Konami offering it's a bit of a disappointment. The concept is simple - hurtle through a scrolling landscape, shooting baddies, picking up bigger weapons . . . and so on. I suppose it's just a very colourful GREEN BERET. The title music isn't bad, but the speech hasn't been done very well – it sounds like someone with a cold. The whole game has that 'Well, it's okay' feel about it. I enjoyed JAIL BREAK to a certain extent but that feeling didn't last too long.

Mass — CRITICISM

Initially there is a catchy tune that gives a feeling of urgency but it's a shame that it does not play throughout the game, as the poor and repetitive sound effects make the game uninteresting. The scrolling is slightly jerky, as is the movement of the characters legs whilst moving along the screen. On the other hand, the movement of the main character up and down the screen is quite smooth. The background settings, on the whole, are very colourful - especially the street scenery. The game seems to rest on the amount of things on screen rather than variation and it does become monotonous blasting away at the same type of bad guys throughout. JAIL BREAK is an easily playable, but eventually frustrating, game.



PRESENTATION 68%
Nice loading screen, simple straightforward instructions.

GRAPHICS 70%
Colourful background scenery, but jerky characters and scrolling.

SOUND 71%
Catchy title tune, marred by poor unimaginative sound effects throughout.

PLAYABILITY 66%
Starts off right in the midst of the action and becomes very difficult.

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 65%
Frustratingly repetitive throughout the five levels.

VALUE FOR MONEY 62%
Overpriced for such a simply conceived game.

OVERALL 65%
A plain, unimaginative, shoot 'em up.

DANDY

Electric Dreams, £7.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick and keys

Following the release of *Gauntlet*, two player role-playing games seem to be all the rage. This time, **Electric Dreams** have come up with *Dandy* – their variation of the dungeon adventure theme. A little known fact is that *Dandy* was actually the very first game of this type. Originally written some years ago, it inspired the arcade *Gauntlet* and all the conversions that were to follow. Therefore, shouldn't *Gauntlet* be called a '*Dandy*-clone'?

Dandy has two main characters, Thor and Sheber (in one-player mode, only Thor appears on screen). Their task is to fight their way through fifteen levels of a dungeon complex before their allotted 1000 energy points run out.

Scattered throughout the dungeons are keys, treasure, food and spells. These are collected for later use by simply passing over them. Food automatically increases energy by fifty points, treasure can be exchanged for ten energy points and spells can be cast randomly. The function of a spell is to either kill, paralyse or disorientate the oncoming enemy. Objects picked up and remaining energy are indicated below their respective icons at the base of the screen. Care must be taken not to shoot any of the collectable items, especially the keys, for they are then lost forever – possibly making the completion of a level impossible.



Mass — CRITICISM

DANDY is a very poor attempt at a GAUNTLET variant with its playability, graphics and sound nowhere near the definitive standard. The graphics are ill-defined and extremely jerky, with the main characters, and the opposition, often merging into an indistinguishable mess, mostly because of the lack of colour. The sound is of a similar poor standard, being limited to a few bleeps and bangs. DANDY leaves a lot to be desired and is totally uninspiring.

Richard — CRITICISM

At first sight, I thought DANDY could be a passable version of the type of game we have all grown to know and love over the past few months. However, the further I got into it, the more I realised maybe this isn't such a good buy after all. The updating of the screens really annoyed me. Every time a character goes to the end of a screen the next one is set up block by block; doing this over and over again can prove very irritating and spoils the whole feel of the game. Pass on this one.

The enemy comes in three forms. Spiders are the easiest to destroy, with a single shot taking care of them. Ghostly Monks and Demon Heads are a little more resilient, taking five direct hits before they are eliminated. Demon heads appear from the dungeon walls and follow the characters everywhere, while monks are found in the vicinity of the lifts (from which they emanate). Contact with these creatures depletes your energy total by ten.

Eliminating all of the opposition on screen allows you to shoot the lifts shut, preventing them from reappearing on that particular screen. Your character can teleport via the Transporter pads (a black disc within a square), thus gaining access to totally enclosed rooms.

A clue is awarded when all the treasure has been collected, and the trap door leading to lower dungeons found. When sufficient clues are obtained the *Dandy* riddle can be solved and the game completed.

Anthony — CRITICISM

Electric Dreams seem to have dropped several clangers after TEMPEST – and DANDY is yet another one. Even at a budget price DANDY would be hard to accept, poorly defined user defined graphics and the fact that it's written in compiled BASIC all go towards making this only slightly better than STORM. Overall, this is yet another program that should not have been released. Let's hope Electric Dreams can do better in future.

PRESENTATION 38%
Poor instruction leaves the player confused at first.

GRAPHICS 41%
Jerky and ill defined characters, with poor colour.

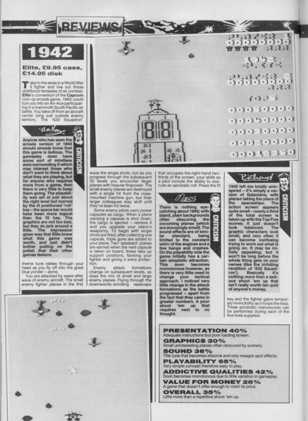
SOUND 19%
Limited to bleeps and bangs.

PLAYABILITY 70%
Simple to play . . .

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 56%
. . . but rapidly becomes tiresome.

VALUE FOR MONEY 35%
Well over-priced.

OVERALL 39%
An amateurish attempt at an ageing concept.



1942

Elite, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk

Take to the skies in a World War II fighter and live out those childhood fantasies of air combat. **Elite**'s conversion of the **Capcom** coin-op arcade game, *1942*, could turn you into an Air-Ace participating in a mammoth South Pacific air battle. You take off from an aircraft carrier lying just outside enemy territory. The '633 Squadron' theme tune rattles through your head as you fly off into the great blue yonder – alone.

You are attacked by wave after wave of enemy aircraft. The small enemy fighter planes in the first wave fire single shots, but as you progress through the subsequent 32 levels you encounter larger planes with heavier firepower. The small enemy planes are destroyed with a single hit from the nose-mounted machine gun, but their larger colleagues stay aloft until they've been hit twice.

Some enemy pilots carry power capsules as cargo. When a plane carrying a capsule is shot down, the cargo is ejected – retrieve it and you upgrade your plane's weaponry. To begin with single shots are fired; after collecting one capsule, triple guns are added to your plane. Two 'assistant' planes are earned when the next capsule is taken on board, these take up support positions, flanking your fighter and giving it extra protection.

Enemy attack formations change on subsequent levels, as does the mix of small and large enemy planes. Flying through the downwardly-scrolling seascape that occupies the right-hand two-thirds of the screen, your skills as a pilot include the ability to execute an aerobatic roll. Press the f3 key and the fighter gains temporary invincibility as it loops the loop. Three acrobatic manoeuvres can be performed during each of the five lives supplied.

Anthony — CRITICISM

Anyone who has seen the arcade version of 1942 should already know that this game is tedious. The gameplay does have some sort of mindless aura surrounding it which may interest those who don't want to think about what they are playing, but for anyone who requires more from a game, then there is very little to keep them going. The playability was set at just about the right level but marred by the ill positioned 'roll' key – the space bar would have been more logical than the f3 key. The graphics are not too bad, but they do jerk around a little. The impression given was that Elite knew what this game was worth, and just didn't bother putting on the polish that their other games feature.

Mass — CRITICISM

There is nothing eye-catching about 1942; with bland, plain backgrounds often obscuring the oncoming planes (which are annoyingly small). The sound effects are of similar standard, being limited to the constant whirr of the engines and a few bangs and crashes. On the playability side the game initially has a certain simplistic attraction. This soon becomes monotonous however, as there is very little need to change your tactical approach. I noticed very little change in the attack formations as the battle progressed – apart from the fact that they came in greater numbers. A poor shoot 'em up that requires next to no thought.

Richard — CRITICISM

1942 left me totally uninspired – it's simply a version of Galaxians, with planes taking the place of the spaceships. The action screen appears quite small – nearly a third of the total screen is taken up with the Top Five scores; it just doesn't look balanced. The graphic characters look small, and very often it can become confusing trying to work out what is going on. It may be initially appealing, but it won't be long before the whole thing gets on your nerves (like the irritating rendition of '633 Squadron'). Basically it's nothing more than a tedious shoot 'em up that isn't really worth ten quid of anyone's money.

PRESENTATION 40%
Adequate instructions but poor loading screen.

GRAPHICS 30%
Small uninteresting planes often obscured by scenery.

SOUND 36%
Title tune that becomes irksome and only meagre spot effects.

PLAYABILITY 65%
Very simple concept therefore easy to play.

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 42%
Soon becomes monotonous due to little variation in gameplay.

VALUE FOR MONEY 28%
A game that doesn't offer enough to merit its price.

OVERALL 35%
Little more than a repetitive shoot 'em up.



ACE

Cascade, £9.95 cass, joystick or keys

Once again, your country needs you. The enemy are coming by land, air and sea. And guess who has to single-handedly face this massive onslaught? That's right – you do! Naturally, the government has seen fit to provide you with the best in military hardware before sending you on this hazardous mission. The AWAT fighter plane is the latest thing in flying technology. Cannon, air to air missiles, air to ground missiles, air to ship missiles, flares and fluffy dice – it's got the lot.

After selecting one of four missions and the difficulty level, the AWAT is then steered towards the opposing forces. Depending on the mission selected, the objective will either be ground targets, aeroplanes, ships, or a combination of all three. When all three are encountered together, the ground targets must be destroyed before they overrun the AWAT's bases. Following this, the enemy planes must be found and dealt with before the ship can finally be destroyed. The enemy aircraft come in two varieties: the delta wing bombers, and the fast and manoeuvrable fighter planes.

When the mission has been successfully completed, the ace pilot can steer for home to refuel his fighter for the next mission. Having returned to base, descending below 500 feet causes the runway to reappear on screen. The AWAT's speed must be reduced to under 200 knots, and the altitude gently reduced until the plane touches down.

In-flight refuelling is another available option. To carry out this manoeuvre, rendezvous is made with a flying fuel tanker – the screen then switches to air-to-air refuelling mode. The AWAT must be carefully aimed at the nozzle of the tanker, using fine adjustments of speed, height and bank.

The enemy must be dealt with quickly in order to stop them completely overrunning the country, including the AWAT's bases. These bases must be protected, as re-arming is impossible when they are all destroyed. The AWAT only has a limited amount of missiles. When this supply is exhausted, the fighter's Cannon is the only weapon which can be employed against the advancing enemy. These are a poor substitute however, as it takes quite a few cannon hits to destroy any target.

When the AWAT makes its way to within range of the enemy forces, the radar then becomes a useful guide. Ground targets show up as dots, and planes show up as arrows (pointing up or down, depending on whether they are above or below you).

The AWAT can take quite a bit of punishment from enemy missiles before it finally succumbs. A warning signal flashes on the instrument console when an enemy missile is launched. The AWAT is equipped with a rear view camera, this can be used as an aid to evasive flight if the oncoming missile is launched from behind. The ideal action in this event is to drop a flare, this usually acts as a decoy to the heat-seeking missiles. As the plane sustains more damage, intricate systems (such as the camera and radar) cease to function. Eventually, constant sustained damage takes its toll and the plane is shot down.

There is a two-player mode where one player flies the AWAT, and another takes care of the guided missiles. In this case, Player Two has separate controls, and can manoeuvre his own sight independently of the plane's direction.

The object of the game is to rack up points – by blowing up the enemy's weapons and repulsing the evil invaders.

Anthony — CRITICISM

Cascade describe ACE as a flight simulator, but this version is anything but – it didn't come together properly. The graphics were at best bland, and at worst confusing – and the sound left a lot to be desired. I am always very critical of flight simulations, especially when they are nothing more than second rate shoot 'em ups with a moving horizon. Be warned and take a long look at this game before buying.

AWAT appears at the end of the runway – all revved up and ready to go. So open up the throttle and get the speed up to 150 knots, pull back on the stick and pull up the undercarriage – next stop the battlefield!

The enemy's location can be found by calling up and surveying the map – accessed via the 'M' key. Using the compass, the

Mass — CRITICISM

Well – it's not a flight sim, but at the same time it's not a shoot 'em up. I think I'd rather have one or the other, rather than this sort of 'in between' effort. But I can certainly see that it would appeal to people who don't like full-blooded flight sims and are looking for something slightly different.

This is really a series of five linked scenarios: take off, shoot planes, shoot tanks, shoot ships, refuel and land. All are quite fun by themselves, but as far as I'm concerned, the whole thing doesn't really hang together. A case of falling between two stools, I suppose.

Richard — CRITICISM

ACE is a curious mixture of a combat and a flight simulation and it has left me somewhat confused. What are we supposed to be doing – shooting the enemy and ignoring the controls perhaps or maybe we should be flying so well that we avoid the enemy altogether? The graphics are reasonable, if a bit jerky, and serve their purpose. It didn't do anything for me.

PRESENTATION 72%
Insufficient instructions, and a confusing on-screen display.

GRAPHICS 55%
Bland and very jerky.

SOUND 41%
Usual white noise aircraft effects.

PLAYABILITY 56%
Not bad, but several flaws render the game irritating.

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 50%
If you persevere it may be worth the effort.

VALUE FOR MONEY 54%
Too pricey for what it really offers.

OVERALL 58%
A theoretically interesting mixture of flight and combat that doesn't really come off.

EXPLORER

Electric Dreams, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick and/or keys

The number of locations in a game has always been a good selling point – most cassette inlays end up plastered with headlines such as 'Over two hundred locations!'. Any avid game mapper just can't resist a temptation like that. So, just what are they going to think of **The Ram Jam Corporations**'s latest creation, *Explorer*, which claims to contain the largest mappable area ever seen. It doesn't just have a meagre few thousand locations, or the pittance of the odd million – *Explorer* claims to possess 40 billion locations! Actually, 'location' is probably not quite the correct term – the truth of the matter is that a player can stand in any one of billions of places. What we really have is a game with an incredible number of *views!*

The action takes place on an Emerald planet which resides some thirty billion light years from the nearest civilisation. Your interstellar space cruiser has crashed onto the planet and smashed into nine fragments, which are now scattered somewhere within the billions of settings. The only way to escape from the planet is to locate every fragment individually and re-assemble the cruiser before the energy level is exhausted.

There are two ways in which the game can begin, depending on where the craft crashes. Crashing on rough terrain, such as the tops of trees or in a lake, results in your being asked to input a location to which you can be transported in safety. As there are so many places to go you can input anything – there's a location for nearly everything – your name, the name of the cat, magazines . . . The second means of landing is to find a safe place, land there, and begin to explore immediately. There are a number instruments which have survived the crash, the most important of these being the object sonar which can be accessed at any point during the game.

This issues a statement giving details of the bearing of the the object in degrees and the distance you are from it. With billions of places to visit, the fragments aren't all going to be within walking distance. To overcome this, you can take to the air (with the aid of the jet pack) and fly a considerable distance before resuming the search. Movement between points on the ground is also quite straightforward. Standing at any one point, you are able to swing around 360 degrees. The direction in which you are facing is illustrated by the,compass at the top right of the screen. Using this to select the heading in which you wish to move, you set off.

If you understand the navigational theory of triangulation it might just be worth your while planting a few signal beacons. These give you co-ordinates to help plot your present position.

Strange occurences take place on the Emerald planet. One of the weirdest of these phenomena are the strange swirling patches of colour which occasionally appear. These are in fact doorways, which tempt you to enter. On entering the doorway you input the desired destination, using a similar method to that employed during the crash routine at the beginning.

The only opposition that faces an explorer are the robotic bugs which flit around. It's a kill to survive situation, and the only way to come out on top here is to blast them with your laser pulse gun.

The completion of the game depends on your navigational skills, and your patience to deal with all those locations.

<arrows>
Fire
178





Richard — CRITICISM

Having billions of locations within a game appears amazing – if they're all there (I haven't had time to count every one). However, with that number of places to visit, it's quite obvious that something has to suffer. Unfortunately in this case it's the actual gameplay. The tasks become very repetitive and tiresome – especially when searching for a fragment of your ship. You head off in one direction, following the co-ordinates given by the scanner, you land again and it gives more directions. Eventually after much buzzing around you might get somewhere, but more often than not I ended up getting lost and very confused. The graphics aren't anything special and most of them are assembled from line drawings with blocks of pastel colours behind them – quite uninteresting. Even so the game held some kind of fascination for me – even if it was only because of the size – but don't expect to be fanatically gripped by it, it's just not one of those games.

Anthony — CRITICISM

EXPLORER works much better in theory than it does in practice. The playing area is so big that it may take ages to solve but until then there is nothing to keep me progressing further into the plot. The graphics were fairly well designed if a little confusing, and it was a great pity that there is no sound to speak of. Not a game I could play for very long.

Mass — CRITICISM

I must be honest and say that although EXPLORER has some great features, such as the number of locations and the navigational system, I found it very confusing to actually interpret what was going on. Yes, it does have billions of locations but they didn't work very well in the context – and the graphics were a bit substandard for my liking. Overall, it's left me a bit disappointed. I can see the attraction but it's not one for me.

PRESENTATION 56%
Reasonable inlay but not informative enough for this type of intricate game.

GRAPHICS 58%
Individually good, but as there is so much it becomes repetitive.

SOUND 0%
None.

PLAYABILITY 60%
Not that difficult to play when mastered.

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 50%
It's not really fascinating enough to become compulsive.

VALUE FOR MONEY 55%
The billions of locations may justify the price, but the game certainly doesn't.

OVERALL 54%
An interesting project that hasn't really been exploited to the full.



THE VIKINGS

Kele Line, £9.95 cass, joystick or keys

Scandinavian based company, Kele Line, kick off their first batch of UK releases with their close-to-home subject of the *Vikings* – featuring a rotund Viking by the name of Erik. Erik enjoys nothing more than a bit of good old-fashioned marauding. When he gets wind of a fortune stashed away in a castle on Death Island, a nearby chain of two islands, he decides that it's about time he earned himself some dosh.

The player takes the role of Erik, whose adventure begins on the most southerly of the two islands. The inhabitants are an unfriendly lot, who aren't too keen on the idea of Erik popping in to pillage their settlement. So as soon as Erik is in view, they begin hurling spears at him. Being hit by a spear results in Erik's energy bar drooping slightly – eventually costing him one of his five lives.

To protect himself, Erik must locate a magical spear. Finding this provides him with a continual supply of spears to hurl back at the opposition. Also concealed somewhere on the island is a shield. When found and picked up, this provides Erik with a bit more protection – when he's carrying this the enemy spears lose some of their destructive powers.

Now, safely protected, Erik must scout off in search of a ladder – which comes into play when a flaming torch is found. With the flaming torch added to his armoury Erik can burn down the villagers' huts. Under one of these huts lies a ship's mast and an oar. Having collected both of these, Erik can head for the beach, climb in a boat and sail to the second island.

The castle, wherein lies the treasure, is located on this island. However, there is a strong wall around the landing area, and the treasure can only be taken when the wall has been demolished. Breaking through the wall reveals another open plain covered with even more objects that Erik can use to break into the castle. Unfortunately, the Vikings on this island are twice as rough, twice as tough, and carry twice as many spears which they throw twice as fast – eeek!

Richard — CRITICISM

For a first UK release, this offering from Kele Line is slightly weak. The first thing that hits you is always very important – unfortunately the title screen is little more than a mess of colour. There is also something strange about the tune. Though it is rather good, it doesn't begin until the game is being played – the title screen is left in deathly silence! The action isn't particularly innovative but it's fun to begin with. Once you've sorted out which objects do what, there's very little to actually come back to. The graphics are a bit fat, but they scroll rather nicely. Unfortunately, the scrolling of the screen also affects the status line so that it wobbles about while Erik is moving – which can get very irritating. As a full price game it doesn't really stand up, let's hope that their next game is an improvement.

Mass — CRITICISM

I know one thing that VIKINGS definitely is, and that's fun. It all revolves around solving puzzles, building a ship and beating up the bad guy, but I also found lots of pleasure from killing the peasants and burning down their huts. After all that's what Vikings do best! The tune, although quite good, suddenly cuts in when play commences, and would have been more at home on the poor loading screen. The screen lay- outs are colourful and well designed but the graphics are rather blocky and tend to jerk a lot. I've found that a game with optional mindless violence always goes down well – it did with me.

Anthony — CRITICISM

VIKINGS is definitely what Rambo should have been. The graphics are fairly well designed (if a little jerky) and the game tune is a little repetitive, but the game is great. Puzzles have to be thought out in a logical order, but they do not detract from the main gameplay of running around performing mindless acts of violence on the villagers. An above average game – if a little over-priced.

PRESENTATION 56%
Rather garish title screen.

GRAPHICS 60%
A bit blocky but generally sufficient.

SOUND 78%
A great tune plays throughout the game.

PLAYABILITY 65%
A simple concept . . .

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 54%
. . . which soon becomes repetitive.

VALUE FOR MONEY 55%
Over the odds for a basic run around game.

OVERALL 60%
A simple game that does little to inspire.



REVIEWS

HARDBALL

Accolade, £9.95 cass, £13.95 disk, joystick or keys

Possibly without the same impact as American Football, Baseball is another attempt to foist an all American sport on the unsuspecting Brits.

Hardball consists of a series of innings. One team fields (or pitches) the other team bats. There are four bases. To score a point, a batsman must get round all four bases. He can stop at any base, and then try to get further round when another batsman hits the ball. A batsman is out if the ball is caught, or he runs to a base and the baseman gets the ball before the batsman reaches it.

A batsman is also out when he receives three strikes. When a ball is pitched it is judged by the umpire to be a ball, or a strike. A strike occurs if the ball goes past the batsman between his knee and armpit, or if the batter swings at it. If a batsman is awarded four balls before three strikes, he can walk to the first base.

The game consists of three screens, the pitcher screen, the fielding screen and the team screen. The team screen shows the nine players currently on the field. Should you wish to make a substitution, a further list of 16 players will be shown. You must be careful to choose the correct man for that position – it's no good getting a second base man to pitch the ball.

The pitcher is the most important position at the ball for the fielding team goes. Each pitcher has at his command up to seven different types of pitch including a sinker, swerve ball, outside ball, fastball, really fastball, change up or screwball. When you bring on a new pitcher you will be presented with a new menu of to choose from. Pitchers gradually become tired, especially if they keep pitching fastballs, so it is a good idea to bring on a sub when the ball is being struck frequently by the batsmen.

Once a player has been substituted, he can't be brought back on. The pitching screen shows the pitcher on the mound, the batsman and the catcher. The pitcher chooses the type of ball he will pitch and then gets a further choice of where he wants to aim the ball. All the batsman has to do is time his swing, and choose whether to swing high, low, left or right. He can also decide to bunt – block the ball with the bat and then run, or instruct any men on the bases to try to "steal a base" by running to the next base regardless of what the batsman does.

If the batsman connects, the screen changes to a plan view of the pitch. The pitcher controls the fielders as they scamper around and try to catch the ball and return it as quickly as possible to a base. The batsman controls the running between bases.

When three batsman are out, the innings is over. When both sides have had nine innings the game is over unless the game is drawn, at which it continues until one team wins. The game can be played against the computer or another person.

Anthony — CRITICISM

I must admit to being a Baseball fan and have waited a long time for this conversion to arrive – it was well worth the wait. The graphics are very realistic, even if the fielding screen is a little bland. The different forms of pitching are excellently reproduced with the difficulty of hitting the ball being set according to the type of pitch. Even if you don't like Baseball on the television you may still like HARDBALL – so take a look.

Mass — CRITICISM

This game has gradually grown on me. At first I thought it was just too tough and it wasn't until my third game that I scored a run! But once you've mastered hitting the ball, it's really a good game and a fine simulation. The animation on the pitching screen is well done. The only slightly tacky bit is the fielding screen which lacks colour and graphic detail. At all points in the game there are lots of decisions to make all adding to the atmosphere of a highly detailed simulation – even down to giving the batting averages! This is the best baseball simulation to date, but it still won't make me a fan of this boring sport.

Richard — CRITICISM

If you can imagine WORLD SERIES BASEBALL with a bit more realism then you've got this – and I like it. The pitching screen, from the point of view of graphics and playability, is very well done – with good use of colour and possesses all the necessary information for continual understanding of what is going on. Unfortunately the inlay instructions are a bit too much to take in all at once – however, with a bit of experimentation it wasn't long before I got to grips with it. Baseball is a sport that appears to go down well on computer and HARDBALL is well worth checking out, even if it is only for a taste of something different.

PRESENTATION 82%
Lots of good instructions on and off screen.

GRAPHICS 79%
Ranging from good to pretty awful.

SOUND 35%
Usual Baseball type effects.

PLAYABILITY 78%
Somewhat difficult to begin with . . .

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 75%
. . . but with a bit of determination you'll soon be making home runs.

VALUE FOR MONEY 74%
Too expensive for just 'curious' buyers.

OVERALL 76%
A pretty competent Baseball game conversion.


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Screen shots taken from Arcade version.

DRAGON'S LAIR

Software Projects, £8.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick and keys

Long ago, in an age of chivalrous deeds and mystical powers there existed a peaceful kingdom ruled by the good King Aethelred. For all the jewels and treasures in the land the most precious thing, by far, was the king's own daughter, the beautiful Princess Daphne. Then one day there came into Aethelred's kingdom an evil dragon named Singe, ruler of a dark, mis-begotten land. Singe demanded the right to rule the land. When Aethelred refused to hand over his kingdom, Singe kidnapped and imprisoned Daphne in a crystal sphere deep within the bowels of his enchanted domain – threatening to kill her unless his terms were met. Only one man could save the Princess – Daring Dirk, the King's champion and bravest of Knights.

Dirk must face seven perilous locations before he encounters Singe himself, and earns the chance to free the princess.

THE FALLING DISK
Dirk must carefully manoeuvre along a lowered drawbridge before leaping onto a large disc suspended over a deep shaft. Once safely aboard, he faces the Blow Genies which appear one at a time – just off the disk and from any direction. The only way Dirk can save himself from plummeting into the depths below, is by standing in the centre of the disk and running into the wind produced by the Genie. After withstanding a random number of Genies, another drawbridge appears to the left of the screen. Dirk must quickly leap onto this before progressing to the next location.

SKULL HALLWAY
An enlarged Dirk finds himself in the foreground of a long corridor. Using careful timing, nimble leaping (sideways, back and forth) and nifty swordplay, he must fight off or avoid snapping skulls, clutching skeletal hands, gruesome goo and clouds of bats. He then exits via the last door on the right.

THE BURNING ROPES
There is no turning back for Dirk now, as he leaps and swings on ropes from platform to platform in an attempt to escape from roaring flames. As he reaches the end of the first of three tiers, a lift takes him upwards and a timely jump is required to place him safely at the start of the second. He must work his way to the lift at the far end, and then upwards to the final tier. Once more swinging ropes are to be negotiated before he makes a quick exit to next location.

THE WEAPONS ROOM
Entering the armoury, Dirk stands flanked by two clay golems. Using his sword he must fight off enchanted weapons that fly at him from every angle, as he leaps from left to right in a desperate attempt to prevent the walls from closing in.

RAMPS AND GIDDY GOONS
Here our hero faces a series of nine treacherous icy ramps which must be leapt across in sequence. Positioned on some are the fierce Giddy Goons, which must be disposed of before it is possible to jump to the next. Once a ramp is left it quickly vanishes, making retreat impossible.

THE TENTACLE ROOM
Dodging in all directions and using swift swordplay, Dirk must avoid and/or destroy the many slithery tentacles that emanate from the floor and ceiling, before finally making his exit through the door at the back.

Mass

CRITICISM

DRAGON'S LAIR is a lot of fun to play. Unfortunately the level of difficulty is somewhat erratic, with some locations (Skull Hall for instance) being almost impossible to complete while others pose no problems at all. Graphically the game also varies from dungeon to dungeon. Dirk makes swift smooth movements on some, while on others he is slow and very jerky – especially in the checkerboard and final screens. The sound on the other hand is very good indeed with nice effects throughout, and each location having a different tune. Overall a great game – marred only by a few extremely difficult screens.



Anthony

CRITICISM

DRAGON'S LAIR has to be one of the hardest games I have ever played, but at the same time it's one of the most enjoyable. The only screen which all of us had problems with was the Skull Hallway. This tended to be difficult in the extreme, but once past it, the game is great fun again. Finally, killing the dragon is a great relief – but be warned, even if you master the game you'll be coming back to it time and again. The graphics could have been improved on certain screens, but they move well – if a little jerkily. A great game which should never fail to be addictive.

THE SECOND DISC
Entering from the right and leaving from the left, Dirk finds this falling disk very much the same as the first – except that the Genies blowing power seems to have depleted. Dirk must beware not to overshoot his run into the wind.

THE DEADLY CHECKERBOARD
Aethelred's champion comes face to face with Singe's champion (a black knight) in large room with a checkerboard floor. The phantom black knight appears for a short time, during which he sends electric shocks along the grids then quickly vanishes – only to appear on another square. Dirk must avoid the shocks and cut down the phantom with one blow of his sword, at which point the gate at the far end of the room opens up.

SLAYING THE DRAGON
As Dirk enters the final screen he encounters the looming figure of Singe guarding the imprisoned Daphne, who is precariously





The screen lights up as Dirk strikes the final blow of the game, piercing the bewildered Singe's heart with the magic sword.

Richard — CRITICISM

DRAGON'S LAIR's presentation is brilliant. The title screen (a great picture of the Singe's castle with accompanying tune) works very well indeed, and sets the scene for the rest of the game. The graphics vary slightly, but there's no real problem in that department. Though generally enjoyable, the game verges on being frustrating several times. I can imagine some people becoming annoyed, because if you can't get past a certain screen it tends to ruin the rest of the game. Maybe the inclusion of an option to load the levels separately would have been nice. I felt that DRAGON'S LAIR lacked in consistency, with the difficulty varying greatly from screen to screen. Hopefully the mistakes that occurred here will not happen again in the follow up. I do like it though.

placed on a high ledge. Before they can be happily reunited, Dirk must negotiate the narrow precipice which leads to a magic sword, whilst dodging Singe's fireballs. A bush blocks his path. Standing next to this, Dirk entices Singe to breathe fire at him. When the mighty dragon obliges, Dirk quickly leaps aside and the bush is burnt away, enabling him to proceed to the sword. Once this is obtained, he can leap at Singe from a wooden platform plunging the sword into his evil heart. The screen flashes and Dirk then bounds across the slain corpse to the awaiting Daphne.

Dirk starts the adventure with five lives, more are earned as each dungeon is successfully conquered. Points are awarded each time Dirk destroys or avoids a foe, and also on the completion of a location.

Throughout the game all leaps and movements are accessed by moving the joystick in the appropriate direction. Pressing the fire button produces the sword, except on screens where the sword is unnecessary – in this case the fire button produces a jumping action. On the Ramps and Giddy Goon screen, leaping from ramp to ramp is achieved via use of the space bar.

When death occurs, the reincarnation screen appears. This first shows Dirk crumbling into a pile of bones, then magically being reformed. The number of lives left and the current score is shown at the top of the screen.

Dirk finds himself grabbed by the tarsals in Skull Hallway.

Torn between two ropes, as Dirk nears the the lift to the second tier in the Burning Ropes dungeon.

PRESENTATION 85%
Well packaged; superb opening sequence.

GRAPHICS 79%
The quality varies but generally good.

SOUND 86%
Tunes on every level, and nice effects.

PLAYABILITY 74%
Inconsistent difficulty, ranging from easy to near impossible.

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 85%
A game readily returned to.

VALUE FOR MONEY 87%
Great variation in tactics and gameplay.

OVERALL 85%
An exciting and enthralling challenge.

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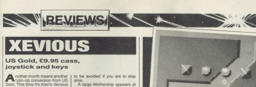
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XEVIOUS

US Gold, £9.95 cass, joystick and keys

Another month means another coin-op conversion from US Gold. This time it's Atari's *Xevious* – a vertically scrolling shoot 'em up. Flying a lone fighter above a large forest landscape, the player takes on an endless stream of alien craft. The fighter must also be used to destroy the enemy's ground installations which it passes over throughout the battle. The alien fighters appear from the top of the screen and attempt to shoot or collide with the fighter – either eventuality results in the loss of one of five lives.

Mass — CRITICISM

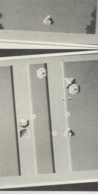
Graphically, XEVIOUS is a disappointment, with slow scrolling backgrounds and blocky alien craft. The supposedly spinning mirrors seem to flap more than spin, and their dull grey colouring makes them look nothing like mirrors at all. With simple gameplay it becomes very tedious and just a matter of routine, not even slightly taxing. Basically a fun shoot 'em up at first, which eventually becomes very boring.

Anthony — CRITICISM

This is not the best conversion to the Amstrad, but it's not as bad as it might have been. The action is far from fast on the first level, and eases the player gently into the game – without being boring. The graphics are of varying quality, from the badly defined first wave of aliens to the not-so-great ground graphics further into the game. I enjoyed XEVIOUS for a while and will probably play it a few times in the future, but it still doesn't warrant its asking price.

The fighter is armed with an unlimited supply of air-to-air missiles and bombs. Missiles are launched by pressing the fire button and are used to destroy enemy craft, while ground installations can be bombed for extra points (a cross-hair is provided for complete accuracy). Most ground targets are harmless and offer no resistance to aerial assault, but a few launch ground-to-air missiles which have to be avoided if you are to stay alive.

A large Mothership appears at regular intervals, and can only be destroyed with a well-placed bomb. Dispose of the Mothership and the mission continues, with the aliens becoming increasingly mean and fast.



Richard — CRITICISM

XEVIOUS isn't a travesty, but it isn't much good either. It's just another 'shoot the descending aliens' type game, that doesn't hold much appeal for me. The graphics are a bit of a disappointment – all a bit big and blocky. It's enjoyable for a while, but at the asking price it really isn't sufficient to qualify as a decent conversion.

PRESENTATION 45%
Insufficient instructions giving no information on attack waves.

GRAPHICS 54%
Blocky, unexciting graphics that scroll slowly.

SOUND 42%
Simple spot effects that add no atmosphere.

PLAYABILITY 56%
Annoying tendency to return you to the start of each section when you die.

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 57%
A simple shoot 'em up that only a die-hard fan will return to.

VALUE FOR MONEY 46%
A bit much to pay for an uninspiring game with a licence stuck on it.

OVERALL 48%
A bland, unexciting, basic shoot 'em up – again.

THE GREAT ESCAPE

Ocean, £8.95 cass, joystick or keys

Okay chaps, it's all up to you. I know we're all in a bit of a spot, locked up in this POW camp, but England expects every man to do his bit and all that. You've got to try to escape from this high security compound and get back to blighty.

The key to a successful escape is to learn the drill. You chaps will just have to knuckle under for a day or two and learn the ropes. If you leave your joysticks alone, your character strolls around the place following the daily routine and the orders of the guards.

After doing that for a bit, you can start to plan your escape. Many men have tried to escape before, and there are a number of tunnels dug under the wire. Obviously it's going to be dark down there, so make sure you've got a torch before you go down. All of the tunnels have something wrong with them and require some extra work before they can be used for escape.

You can only carry two pieces of escape equipment at a time. Unfortunately, to make a successful escape, you must be carrying papers and a compass, otherwise you'll just get picked up by 'Jerry' before you make it to the Swiss border.

So what you need for a successful escape is somewhere to stash the escape equipment where it won't be found. The most important indicator to watch is the morale indicator. This is represented by a flag on a pole. The higher up the pole, the better your morale. Also, while the flag is yellow, everything is hunky dory, and the German guards won't throw you in the cooler. But, as soon as you miss roll call, or a meal time, you are beyond the pale, and the guards will be after you. Certain parts of the place are also 'Verboten', so watch out for the guards when you go exploring.

One character to keep an eye on is the Camp Commandant. He's been known to search prisoners no matter where they are. And if you've got any contraband, he'll have you in solitary before you can say Geneva Convention.

Morale gradually decreases as time passes. Being thrown into solitary loses loads of morale, which must be built back up again by finding pieces of escape equipment and solving puzzles. The camp is full of traps, each has a solution, it's just a question of finding the right equipment.

Points are scored for collecting equipment, digging tunnels, opening doors, and above all, escaping. When the alarm goes off, any guard that is in a straight line from your man makes a bee-line for him and carries out an arrest. So if you're going to do anything rather dubious, stay out of sight of the guards.

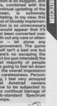
Mass — CRITICISM

Despite the very nasty flickery graphics, there is a rather good game lurking here. A lot more might have been done with the sound and colour. The game's the thing, though, and there is bags of depth and plot. Escaping is a real challenge, and there are a lot of little sub-plots, like getting the uniform and exploring the tunnels. I also like the way the whole game is controlled from joystick, despite the quite complex commands and manipulation of objects.

Anthony — CRITICISM

THE GREAT ESCAPE is a well thought out and addictive game, but the presentation on the Amstrad version is awful. The game plays sluggishly and the screen takes a second to update when it needs to scroll. Since programmers have realised they could just dump Spectrum code to the Amstrad to save time, the quality of this sort of game has gone downhill. Still the game is fun to play, and the idea of finding a way out of the compound has been put together to great effect. Really a good game that should have been more carefully programmed.



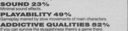


Richard — CRITICISM

The initial impression this gave me really put me off playing it any further. The action is so sluggish, and this, combined with the continual updating of the screen, is extremely irritating. In my view, this kind of shoddy implementation is so unnecessary. It would appear that it's just been converted over with out any care or attention – let alone any improvement. The game itself isn't a bad one but there's no escaping the fact (no pun intended) the vast majority of people are going to feel let down by the overall impression of carelessness. Personally, I feel very annoyed that Amstrad owners have to be subjected to this continual barrage of sub-standard Spectrum dumps.













PRESENTATION 62%
Reasonable on-screen display.

GRAPHICS 48%
Lack of colour, hideous jerky animation.

SOUND 23%
Minimal sound effects.

PLAYABILITY 49%
Gameplay marred by slow movements of main characters.

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 52%
If you can survive the sluggishness there's a game there.

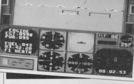
VALUE FOR MONEY 54%
A mediocre effort that doesn't merit its price.

OVERALL 55%
An enjoyable game but with too many faults to make it a worthwhile purchase.

ACRO JET

Microprose, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick or keys

Ever wanted to be a stunt pilot? Well here's your chance, courtesy of **Microprose** – the simulator specialists. Up to now, the company's efforts have been confined to the Commodore, but at last – starting with *Acrojet* – they've begun the process of converting their titles to the Amstrad.



Acrojet contains ten events which can be played by either one, two, three or four players, and these involve flying a BD5J Acrojet around the skies, through, under and over a series of obstacles. There is also a design-it-yourself section, where two or more opponents can design courses and tasks for each other, and then judge each other's flying performances.

The first event, **The Pylon Race**, involves racing around four pylons as quickly as possible, and then executing a successful landing. Event two is a **Slalom race** where the same four pylons are involved, but this time the exercise involves flying a 'figure of eight'. Next is the **Ribbon Cut** where you use the plane to break two ribbons suspended at 150 feet. After that comes the **Inverted Ribbon Cut** – the same stunt flown with the plane inverted. Event five is the **Ribbon Roll**: here two ribbons are suspended in a row – the aim is to fly under one and then execute a complete roll before going under the next ribbon. That is followed by the **Under Ribbon Race**: which is a slalom course where three ribbons have to be flown under in sequence. Event number seven is an **Under Ribbon Loop**: the plane goes under the ribbon, performs a loop, passes over the ribbon inverted, and then descends the back half of the loop to pass under the ribbon again. The next event practices **Spot Landings**: here the pilot flies up to 2,000 feet, and then lands on the runway as close as possible to a marked spot. This is followed by **Flame-Out Landings**, which is a similar stunt, performed without the use of engines. Finally there's the fancy **Cuban Eight** which consists of a half-loop over one ribbon, followed by a half-roll, and another half-loop to go under another ribbon before finally finishing with another half-roll to go under the first ribbon once more. It sounds very complicated.

At the beginning, a pilot can decide on how severe the weather is going to be, and what performance he is likely to get from his jet. Sluggish performance is helpful for beginners, but for the experienced pilot, real-time performance helps with some of the trickier stunts.

The screen gives a 'behind the plane' view of the Acro Jet. This shows the jet's bank and climb, as well as giving some indication of height by use of a shadow. The view can be switched to the sides or the rear – useful for lining up the jet with the runway, or for checking that an obstacle has been passed.

An instrument panel below the main view contains a series of read-outs. A compass gives your heading while an altimeter and vertical velocity indicator indicate height and show whether the jet is going up or down. A display shows the event which the jet is performing and reveals the obstacles to be negotiated and the jet's position. An artificial horizon gives the pilot an idea of his attitude, and indicators monitor the status of wheel brakes, air brakes and the undercarriage as well as revealing the amount of flaps in use.

The throttle has settings between 55 and 110 per cent thrust. Engine power above 95 per cent causes the engine to overheat. The engines fail if they run above 650 degrees for too long, or break down immediately if the temperature rises above 700 degrees.

Richard — CRITICISM

Another simulation hits the market and I'm a bit fed up with all of them. ACRO JET has a few good things going for it – it's quite playable, which gets it off on the right foot. The graphics are sufficient, if a bit jerky. The first person perspective view is useful as you can actually relate more to the direction in which you are travelling rather than from the standard cockpit view. ACRO JET didn't keep me enthralled – but if you enjoy games of this nature take a look.

Anthony — CRITICISM

ACRO JET is not what you call a simulator, it's a fun 3D type game for those who enjoy using skill and judgement. It could be described as the HYPER SPORTS of the flying world. The graphics tended to flicker slightly, for which there is no excuse as the sprites are small, and the screen display is rather simple. Even so the game is great fun to play. It might be one of those you will play only a few times a year but I still think it's one for the collection.

Mass — CRITICISM

It all looks very simple on the instruction sheet – just fly in and out of things and around posts. Well I found it very difficult indeed with a lot of practice needed just to fly the plane to a satisfactory degree of competence. Once settled in though, the game becomes great fun to play and the incentive to beat my previous time kept me going for quite a while. For such a small sprite the plane surprisingly jerks around a lot but otherwise the graphics are fine and serve their purpose well. There is no tune and the sound effects are little more than the constant drone of the engines.

PRESENTATION 72%
Unclear option screen but good instructions.

GRAPHICS 67%
Plane flickers slightly but good instrument panel.

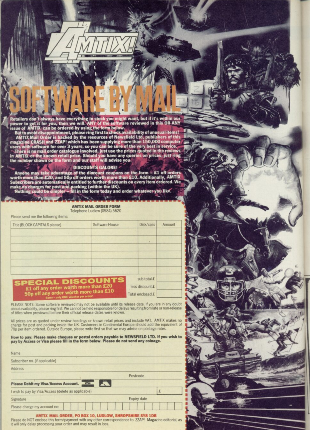
SOUND 35%
Feeble spot effects.

PLAYABILITY 48%
Difficult for a novices.

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 68%
As appealing as any flight sim to an expert.

VALUE FOR MONEY 72%
If you're going to buy a flight sim, this may be worth it.

OVERALL 78%
A highly detailed flight simulation.


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HYPERBOWL

Mastertronic, £1.99, joystick or keys

Hyperbowl is a type of space hockey, the objective being simply to score more points than the opposition.

Two space ships fight it out in an attempt to move a large disk (or puck) either into their opponent's goalmouth for two points, or on to the goal-line (situated behind the goals) for one point. The goal-lines are effectively the two end boundaries of the huge oblong playing field. The top and bottom boundaries act as a deflector shield preventing both the disk and the player's craft from leaving the playing area.

The first thing that strikes you are the extremely smooth scrolling vector graphics. Unfortunately the use of colour in the play ing area is poor, being limited to four colours. There is a nice tune that accompanies the option screens, but the sound effects are sparse using only white noise. On the other hand, the gameplay is good – once the controlling of the craft has been mastered – and the game becomes rather fun to play.

The two ships are able to move the disk by either shooting or ramming it. There is a ship option screen, at which both players (if in two-player mode) can choose from a list of ten different ships. The top row of five ships increase in their speed capabilities from left to right and have non-homing shots. On the other hand the second row are not so fast but have homing-shot capabilities in varying degrees. That to the left has a 20 per cent homing missile rate, with each ship to its right increasing in strike rate up to a maximum of 75 per cent.

The top of the playing screen shows the immediate vicinity around the disk, while below that is the overall map of the playing field. Ships can fly off the screen at any time. When this happens, their position is indicated on the overall map.

I liked this a lot – there's a great feeling of 'being there' created by the superb way the ships move. Actually, it's really clever – you think you're bashing a ball around but in fact the ball never moves, the screen moves around it. Although the colours are a bit of a let down, it's great fun to play and I would recommend everyone to take a look at it – especially as it is only two quid!

When a player is off screen, he can still direct his ship by use of a directional arrow, which is situated on the control panel. Pushing forward on the joystick accelerates the craft while pulling back stops it dead.

In one-player mode the computer assumes the role of the second craft. The player then has the choice to either play a single game or to take part in a tournament, with both options leading to the skill level option: easy, expert or ace. The tournament consists of four games leading up to a final.

I found HYPERBOWL much more enjoyable than XENO because it has much more scope and requires extra skill. The ability to select from several different ship types adds to the excitement, with each ship having its own special abilities. The unfortunate bug in the game where the ship bounces off lines that do not exist is rather irritating. Once you get the hang of regaining control though, this bug can be used to your advantage. The speed of the game is amazing as is the presentation. One budget game that I would be happy to pay a little more for.

The computer opponent increases in skill with each successive win.

Games last for five minutes, with the winner being the one who obtains the highest score.

Presentation 76%
Plenty of gameplay options, and an informative inlay.

Graphics 60%
Sparse vector graphics.

Sound 65%
Good tune but can be repetitive.

Playability 74%
Straightforward gameplay, although the controls proved a little awkward.

Addictive Qualities 76%
Plenty to keep you interested.

Value for money 79%
Well worth your two quid.

Overall 76%
A simple, but recommended, budget game.

VAMPIRE

Code Masters, £1.99 cass, joystick or keys

Although **Code Masters** only launched their first product a few months ago, they've already cornered 2.5% of the software market and currently rank as Britain's seventh top software house. With all the celebrating that they must have been enjoying, it's surprising that they've had the time to put any more games out – but they just keep coming! *Vampire* is one of their three new releases this month and takes the shape of an old friend – the platform game.

The accompanying storyline, which could have come straight from any Gothic horror novel, tells of Brok the Bravê, the main character who you control in the mystical country of Hawkland. The objective is simple – you must kill Dracula, the most evil vampire of all time.

There are 95 screens, all of which are built up in a similar fashion. They are constructed of bricks (which make up the vast majority of the platforms), with accompanying decoration such as ornate chairs, tables, pictures and the like – in fact anything that can provide a place to leap from. The castle in which the action takes place is littered with Dracula's evil minions, all of whom want to see Drok leave this mortal coil. With only one life to play with, a player should keep a careful eye on the energy bar at the bottom of the status window – when it drops to a dangerously low level, it's time to hunt out some food. This is instantly noticeable as it always flashes attractively.

As with any platform adventure, certain objects need to be collected and secret passages wait to be revealed. Three specific objects must be found and used in order to overcome the evil Dracula. Drok is then transported into deep space where the final confrontation takes place.

This type of game has always been a favourite of mine, and this one is no exception. The energy bar idea is a great help as it is inevitable that the character will make contact with at least one attacker. The graphics, although small, are well defined and of the same quality as JET SET WILLY. Code Masters have once again produced a good quality game for which no one should object to forking out two quid.

Initially VAMPIRE looked like a normal 'rush it out quick platform game'. But after a few minutes of play it began to grow on me. Although the characters are mainly quite small they don't appear at all inadequate, and the majority of them are animated quite well. Most of the screens need quite a bit of time spent on them if you are to discover the most suitable route, but the more familiar you become with them the further it is possible to progress into the game. I've been playing VAMPIRE quite a bit and I'm nowhere near finishing it yet, but it has provided a most enjoyable challenge.

Presentation 72%
Pleasant attract mode with an informative title screen.

Graphics 65%
Nothing spectacular, but very good use of colour due to the split screen.

Sound 28%
Nothing special – just a few warning bleeps.

Playability 70%
Instantly enjoyable with little frustration.

Addictive Qualities 67%
There's a definite compulsion to solve the game.

Value for money 70%
A typical budget game – worth two quid, but nothing more.

Overall 68%
Not exactly innovative but very enjoyable all the same.

SUPER ROBIN HOOD

Code Masters, £1.99 cass

Philip and Andrew Oliver seem to have moved away from **Players**, for whom they produced *Killapede*, and have turned to **Code Masters** to release their latest game – *Super Robin Hood*. This is a platform game that puts Robin in Nottingham Castle, with a final objective of scurrying up the east tower and rescuing the lovely Maid Marian.

Keys can be collected on most screens. They can either open up a route to new screens, or simply to start up the lifts – vital if Robin is to complete his task. Before Maid Marian's chamber is revealed to Robin, he must first collect all the hearts that have been scattered about the castle. No easy task – as on each screen there are Guards which fire crossbow bolts; Spiders and Fireballs that reduce Robin's health points; and a whole host of other obstacles that will try to trip Robin up, causing him to fall long distances. To offset the continual pounding that Robin receives, there are tablets on certain screens which increase his health points by thirty. When these are reduced to below zero, Robin lies on the floor and fires an arrow into the air.

Extensive speech is featured, mostly of the "Help me Robin" variety. There is also a musical score, which rambles on throughout the game. The options screen allows both to be turned off. There is no instant joystick option, instead the re-define keys option must be used in conjunction with the joystick to achieve the desired effect. An option is also included to remove the illustrated scenery, leaving a plain background.

I'm glad they included an option to turn off both the speech and background scenery. Frankly, the speech was extremely annoying and did nothing for the game – and the scenery was just plain garish. Robin can only be described as a cute little character. When given no instruction, he stands around and inspects the scenery. The layout is such that you don't have to go trudging around multiple screens just to find the next heart, which game me the incentive to carry on. SUPER ROBIN HOOD is a pleasant platform puzzle game that is worth two quid of anyone's money.

Code Masters have certainly got off on the right foot with another very good game. It is a pity that the digitised speech couldn't have been a bit better, but then it does take a lot of memory. The music also tends to a bit repetitive, but it is quite jolly; even if it is not quite in keeping with the atmosphere of the program. The biggest problem is with the gameplay, it can be quite difficult to master movement around the screens. For all its short comings, SUPER ROBIN HOOD has a certain addictive ingredient that should keep platform fans enthralled for hours.

Presentation 75%
Nice loading screen, plenty of gameplay options.

Graphics 61%
Simple and colourful, but garish when the background scenery is visible.

Sound 45%
No sound effects, but optional tune plays all the way through. Badly digitised speech.

Playability 67%
Controlling the main character requires practice.

Addictive Qualities 68%
A pleasant fun game easily returned to.

Value For Money 85%
Well worth two quid.

Overall 69%
A simple but puzzling platform game.



SAS ASSAULT COURSE

Atlantis, £1.99, joystick or keys

A one player game in which a single character is guided through an assault course consisting of platforms, ropes, swings, ladders, water pits and walls – all part of the SAS training schedule.

This poses no problems whatsoever, with the screen layouts being simple to negotiate and just a matter of choosing the correct icon. Although there is only one moving character on screen, the graphics are surprisingly slow and jerky. Sound effects are minimal and there is no tune. A poor, uninspiring game that requires next to no concentration.

Before the game commences, there is an option screen which allows a handicap to be set. This can be either twenty, ten or three seconds.

two. The bottom section shows the 'side on' view of the particular status displays; Screen, Strength, Bravery, and Endurance. The Screen display starts from zero, and counts up after each completion of a course section while the other three count down from ten. If an incorrect icon is activated, or if the character should fall off a platform (or one of the other obstacles), the strength and bravery totals decrease by one. Endurance also decreases by a single point if too much time is spent on a screen.

The exercise comes to an abrupt end if either the strength, bravery or endurance figures reach zero, or if the character drowns. A screen then appears informing the player of what happened, and depending on what stage of the course was reached, the time taken to get there – an overall percentage mark is awarded.

The aim is to simply obtain the highest percentage mark possible – and/or complete the course.

The playing screen is split into area of the course to be negotiated, while the top third has the status displays and the action icons. Each of the six action icons controls a different athletic feat: Jump, Climb Ladder, Climb Rope, Swing, Balance and Crawl. These options are accessed by moving the joystick upwards, causing an arrow to flick through the icons.

Directly below are the four

Atlantis have once again presented us with a poor game. SAS ASSAULT COURSE is easy, slow, boring and not worth its asking price. The sound effects are of the ear-splitting, teeth-grinding variety – and put me off before I even started. After all that, there is no in-game tune to speak of. Do yourself a favour and leave this one well alone.

Presentation 35%
Minimal information given on inlay.

Graphics 34%
Poor graphics with a jerky main character.

Sound 29%
No tune, and next to no effects.

Playability 36%
The icon system isn't really necessary – it's more of a hindrance.

Addictive Qualities 32%
Much too simple to be any fun.

Value for money 31%
Not enough involved to justify even this meagre sum.

Overall 33%
A bland and unimaginative platform game.

PROFESSIONAL SNOOKER

Code Masters, £1.99, keys only

This latest offering from Code Masters incorporates all the rules of that very popular TV sport. The program is a two-player only simulation (with a one player practice option) viewed from above the table.

Players use separate keys, thus enabling the program to distinguish which player is at the table. Player One uses the space bar, while player two uses the enter key – thus making it impossible to take a shot out of turn.

Pressing 'Q' causes the snooker cue to appear beside the cue ball. The same key is then used to rotate it around 360 degrees, this allows the cue ball to be aimed at the desired object ball. 'W' and 'E' are used to rotate the cue by small increments, anti-clockwise and clockwise respectively. When the cue is aimed, the object ball appears, totally or partially obscured, behind an enlarged cue ball at the top of the screen. This gives a head on view of the shot to be played, and allows minor corrections to be made in position. At the centre of the cue ball is a small black dot which acts as a marker to show where the cue will strike it. Using the cursor keys it is possible to move the dot around the ball, effectively causing it to spin.

A single press of the appropriate shot key causes the cue to move back and forth behind the cue ball. On pressing it a second time the cue will strike the ball. The strength of shot is determined by the length of time elapsed between the two

The snooker balls move relatively smoothly, but as the game is in mode one the coloured balls are somewhat indistinguishable from each other. The enlarged cue ball and object ball which appear in the top corner of the screen come in very handy, and make the gameplay much more interesting. PROFESSIONAL SNOOKER becomes fun to play but only after a fair amount of practice, as positioning of the cue takes a while to get used to. A reasonable snooker simulation that incorporates all the features of this very popular sport.

Snooker games have never been very good on micros, they are usually too difficult and lacking in realism. PROFESSIONAL SNOOKER is well presented, and has tackled many of the usual problems connected with this type of game – but it is still too unrealistic for me. The graphics glide smoothly around the screen, and the method of aiming is the best I have seen on any version of snooker. Snooker games are getting to be old hat nowadays, but if you don't already own one then it might be a good idea to invest in this.

successive depressions. The shorter time taken between the two actions, the more powerful the shot will be – and vice versa.

After each legal pot of a red ball, a colour must be nominated before play can continue. This is achieved by pressing the corresponding value key (two to seven), at which point the chosen ball will flash on screen. Pressing any key allows play to continue.

Foul shots are indicated in a scrolling message window at the top of the screen, with appropriate compensation being awarded to the opposing player's score.

Presentation 60%
No loading screen, nicely explained instructions.

Graphics 51%
Smoothly moving, but distinguishing between the coloured balls can be difficult.

Sound 19%
No tune, minimal effects.

Playability 65%
Easy controls, but judging the angles proves difficult.

Addictive Qualities 58%
Frustrating at the start, but becomes more enjoyable with practice.

Value for Money 63%
Worth a look at if you're a snooker buff.

Overall 59%
A competent snooker simulation.

SPACE HARRIER

Elite, £8.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick or keys

If you've visited an arcade recently you may have noticed a peculiar beast. It's called *Space Harrier*, and takes the shape of a normal arcade machine – with one important difference. What makes this game so special is the addition of hydraulic arms attached to the 'pilot's seat, which swing the player around exactly in line with his or her movements on screen. **Elite** have tied up the licensing deal, and now release the coin-op classic for the home computer market – without the hydraulic add-ons.

Taking control of a *Space Harrier* - a hi-tech fighter of the future - your task is simply to save the planet from an invading alien force. Equipped with a Jet-Pack and an Ultra Gun, the Space Harrier is capable of taking to the skies to destroy anything which stands in the way of freedom.

The action takes place on an open plain, strewn with hazards such as trees, rocks, large obelisks, and mushroom-shaped obstacles. The action is viewed from behind the hi-tech fighter, with the oncoming foe hurtling along the landscape into the foreground at an alarming speed. Most of the aliens fly in preset formations, either coming from behind or flying towards you.

The frantic action is spread over 18 levels, with the ultimate objective being to amass the highest score possible. At the end of every other level an odious dragon appears – signalled by a change of the in-game tune. Several shots are needed to obliterate the creature.

The Space Harrier begins with five lives, losing one every time he collides with anything on screen.

Mass — CRITICISM

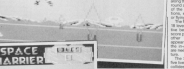
SPACE HARRIER is a fast, all-action vector graphics game, that left me totally confused. I still cannot understand why I could pass through some seemingly solid objects – and die immediately on contact with others. Collision detection apart, the graphics are very nice, with good use of colour and reasonably smooth scrolling. The sound effects added to the three different tunes give the game atmosphere. Taken for what it is, and not comparing it to the arcade game, it's a good fast, fun shoot 'em up.

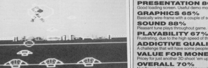
Anthony — CRITICISM

SPACE HARRIER is a game that you'll either love or hate, depending on your joystick skills. To me it was a fairly good effort at a game that depends greatly on speed and pretty graphics. The wire-frame graphics worked fairly well, but tended to confuse me on occasion (and sometimes resulted in the needless loss of a life). Green screen users should find the colour scheme to their advantage. The music was very good, reminding me of the Blake's Seven theme tune. There are different themes for different 'end sections' of the game, and a classical piece for the high score table. A fairly good go at a game that could not really have hoped to be converted to the Amstrad in any recognisable form.

Richard — CRITICISM

Well, what could you expect from a conversion like this? SPACE HARRIER the game is there, but without the hydraulics it's not the same. The arcade machine basically consists of a load of very clever effects that add an extra pinch of excitement to a game which is little more than a 3D shoot 'em up. Now that Elite have taken away all the effects and just left the game it's pretty meaningless. It's not the SPACE HARRIER that we've come to know and love – it's just another 3D wire frame shoot 'em up. On the more positive side it's relatively addictive – a case of the 'just one more go' syndrome. However, it isn't that playable - everything moves fast so you think it moves smoothly, but take a good hard look and see how many aliens just appear from (and disappear into) nowhere. The solid graphics that are there pretty up what would have otherwise been quite dull. Music is well implemented. Despite contrary opinions don't expect to get bowled over or exhausted by SPACE HARRIER because it isn't the game you might imagine – just enjoy it for what it's worth.





PRESENTATION 80%
Good loading screen. Useful demo mode.

GRAPHICS 65%
Basically wire-frame with a couple of solid shapes.

SOUND 88%
Pleasant tune plays throughout game. Simple spot FX.

PLAYABILITY 67%
Frustrating, due to the high speed of the graphics.

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 68%
A challenge that will have some people coming back for more.

VALUE FOR MONEY 62%
Pricey for just another 3D shoot 'em up.

OVERALL 70%
Not Space Harrier as you might know it, but fun to play all the same.


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BRIAN CLOUGH'S

FOOTBALL FORTUNES

CDS, £14.95 cass, £17.95 disk, keys

There have been board games about the great British sport of football, and there have been many computer games about football – but **CDS** are the first to combine the two. This simple but effective idea is put into practice in *Brian Clough's Football Fortunes*, a football board game which uses the computer as an assistant. *Football Fourtunes* sets two to five players in competition as Managers of their own football teams. Like all football managers, they all have the same anbition – to take their team to the top and make lots of money in the process.

The board is set up in a similar fashion to a Monopoly game. Every player is given an amount of money to play with, allocated a team, a counter and the remaining team cards are placed in the centre of the board to use later on in the game. The cards represent players – goalkeepers, defenders, midfielders, attackers and substitutes. They all possess a different value, ranging from 1 (hopeless!) to 5 (really rather good). The teams begin with one goalkeeper, three midfielders, four defenders and three attackers and two substitutes – known as utility players who are

Richard — CRITICISM

What an unusual approach to a computer game! I've really enjoyed playing FOOTBALL FORTUNES – luckily there's always been someone to play it with. That is where the game falls flat – you have to have a group of people who want to play. It is an excellent party game, but the question is will anyone drag out their Amstrad to play it?

The package is superbly presented. The board is very clear, as are the various cards, and I was left in no doubt as to what was happening. It's somewhat akin to Monopoly in it's dealings – although this time you're dealing with teams instead of mortgages. The on-screen presentation is again very clear, and it is evident that a lot of careful planning went into the layout of the menus. If you have a computer orientated family, then this can be immense fun – as long as the seasons don't drag on too long. I enjoyed it and I'm sure it will have a great deal of appeal.

Anthony — CRITICISM

I found it very difficult to believe that anyone would produce a game like this, to me the whole idea seems like a non-seller. Well CDS have, and they've made quite a good job of it. The package is well presented and generally fun to play, although I'm not so sure that it will appeal for long. My only real quibbles are that the instructions aren't as easy to follow as they could be, and that the computer itself doesn't really add anything to the game – Joyce dosen't really do anything that a couple of dice and a few 'chance' cards couldn't have done – at a fraction of the cost.





Mass CRITICISM

There have been attempts to use computers in boardgames before – AWAT for instance. When faced with a product like this, the main question is what does the computer add to the game? Not a great deal in this case. The computer produces 'chance' cards and generates the fixtures, but that isn't really much. As a conventional board game, it's good fun – though any game about football is going to do well. All the components, such as the board, cards and so on, are good quality. The rules could have done with being a little clearer on some points, but generally a little commonsense and a thorough reading of the rules should clear up any confusion. I found that winning was more a question of luck than skill, but Football Fortunes was fun nonetheless.

capable of playing any position.

The strength of each individual player is selected randomly by the computer and, having sorted out the cards and dealt the money, the season can begin. As in conventional board games, a dice is rolled and the players move in turn around a board – the difference in this game is that the computer 'rolls' the dice. Landing on each square produces a different outcome. These are mostly computer-generated and include: financial problems, selection problems, transfers, wages, luck, sponsorship and other team related incidents.

When all the players have taken a turn the actual footy matches can be played. To ensure fair play, the computer requests the current total values of attackers and defenders. The results are then worked out according the the stregths of the players on the opposing sides. They are then displayed on screen, along with the money earned at the gate, which is distributed amongst the managers.

The season consists of eleven matches between twelve clubs. All are in the same division, and have the same objective of scoring as many points to make it into the League or The Cup.

If a manager is running short of money a deal can be made with his contemporaries for the loan or sale of a player – players may also be bought by the bank. New players come into play when one of the managers lands on an auction square. A new player is taken from the top of the upturned pack of remaining players and the managers are left to bid and fight it out between themselves.

Any length of play can be agreed by the managers at the beginning of the game – the minimum being two seasons. Alternatively a specific time limit can be set. Either way you've still got to make your football fourtune!

PRESENTATION 90%
Pack comes complete with board, cards and everything else needed.

GRAPHICS 40%
Simple but effective.

SOUND 23%
Few spot effects – nothing special.

PLAYABILITY 72%
Easy to start and as you learn it you can play better moves.

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 65%
Has the same fascination as a Monopoly game.

VALUE FOR MONEY 60%
Lots of bits and pieces in the package – but it's still a bit steep.

OVERALL 75%
A good family entertainment game.



500cc GRAND PRIX

Activision, £9.99, joystick or keys

Ever fancied having 500cc of raw motorcycle power between your legs? Well here is your chance in **Activision's** *500cc Grand Prix* – a one or two player motor-bike racing simulation.

In two-player mode both participants can see their own bike and the track ahead on one half of a split screen. Player One (the blue bike) on the left hand side, and Player Two (red bike) on the right, compete against each other and four other computer controlled riders. Pushing the joystick forward accelerates the bike and pressing the fire button when in this position steps the bike up one of the four gears. Pulling back on the joystick decelerates the bike and similarly pressing the fire button knocks the bike down a gear. Banking left and right is achieved by moving the joystick in the appropriate direction. Holding the fire button pressed while doing so causes the bike to move quicker across the screen in the chosen direction.

The cycle's dashboards appear at the bottom of the screen. They consist of a speedometer, a rev counter and a numerical gear indicator. At the top of the screen is an overall map of the circuit, flanked by the race times of the two competitors and the lap number of each of the six riders.

The races are carried out on a selection of major circuits from twelve countries, all of which must be negotiated if the riders choose to enter the world championships. Selecting the training option allows the rider to practice over individual circuits.

A race ends only when all of the six bikes have crossed the finishing line.

Richard — CRITICISM

It's been quite some time since we've seen a decent racing game on the Amstrad. 500CC GRAND PRIX isn't perfect, but it is still quite enjoyable. The graphics (despite being a bit chunky) are used quite well, and I very rarely became confused to what was going on. The one surprise that I did get from 500CC is that you can't collide with any of the other bikers – you just happily zoom past them. This is quite an advantage as you don't keep coming off the bike – the only way that a crash is possible is by colliding with the barriers on the side of the road. It's a pity that there's no tune, as music would have added an little extra sparkle to a game which is just missing a little something that prevents it from being excellent.

Mass — CRITICISM

Slow joystick response makes 500CC GRAND PRIX very hard to get used to, as early banking of the bike is required if you wish to safely negotiate the bends. The graphics, being in mode nought, are very colourful with smooth track scrolling. Unfortunately the movement of the bikes is not so smooth, and they tend to jerk across the screen. But having said all that, with a fair ámount of practice the game becomes enjoyable to play and a lot of fun.

Anthony — CRITICISM

The greatest problem with 500CC GRAND PRIX is the joystick response – it's too slow to start off with, but once into the race it becomes too fast. The graphics are used to fairly good effect, and move at a constant speed – even when there are several things on screen. The sound is the closest representation of an engine I have heard on a micro, but it is still quite far removed from the real thing. 500cc is enjoyable for a while, but I doubt if it will hold my interest for long.

PRESENTATION 78%
Nice demo mode, plenty of options.

GRAPHICS 75%
Smooth scrolling backgrounds, marred only by the jerky bikes.

SOUND 28%
Normal motorbike effects.

PLAYABILITY 74%
Generally good but let down by sluggish graphics.

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 70%
The two-player option makes it great fun to race against a friend.

VALUE FOR MONEY 69%
Could have been more competitively priced.

OVERALL 74%
A pleasant racing game from Loriciels.

THERE'S LIES, DAMNED LIES AND PRESS RELEASES!

The snow is pelting down here in Ludlow at the time of writing, but to warm the cockles of your heart here's a few early glances of games that should be reaching you in the very near future. You'll all be pleased to know that the Amstrad is going to have a whale of a time over the ensuing months – there's so much stuff being developed at the moment. A lot of it isn't at the preview stage as I write, but I've managed to scrape some red-hot info together for your delectation.

Sussex based company, **Martech** are bringing out no less than six games over the next couple of months. The first two, which should be with you within a couple of weeks, are *Uchi Mata* and *WAR*. *Uchi Mata* has already been released on the Commodore and takes the shape of a Judo simulation. 'Argggggh, no! Not another bash 'em up', I hear you cry. Don't panic, hold on. If you think about it, judo isn't a martial art that relies on beating your opponent to pieces. The overall concept of judo is in using your opponent's weight and strength against him. In *Uchi Mata*, named after a crippling throw in the sport, careful planning must be taken before throwing your opponent to the floor. The style of grip, positioning of the feet, and other conditions must be taken into consideration, before you can administer a clean cut throw.

Hopefully *Uchi Mata* will be ready for a full review next month. The scrolling shoot 'em up, *WAR*, previewed months ago, is undergoing a final tidying up session and should be ready for next month.

Martech are going to be quizzing your brains in their soon-to-be-released strategy arcade game – *Satellite Wars*. It's based on the sensitive issue of the American Star Wars project – you'll find out more about it as soon as we hear about it. Other promised games include *Catch 23*, a vector 3D arcade adventure, and *Cosmic Shock Absorber* which is a comedy shoot 'em up.

Calling all platform freaks! The long awaited return of **Gremlin Graphics**' cuddly burrowing one, *Monty Mole*, is coming along 'very nicely' according to his press officer, Ian Stewart. It's been dubbed *Auf Wiedersen Monty* and you can find out more about that on the news pages. Gremlin are also producing a few sequels; follow ups to *Thing On A Spring*, *Bounder* and *Jack The Nipper* are underway as I write.

Hewsons, creators of *Impossaball* (which is reviewed in this issue) have the weird sounding *Ranarama* coming out soon. Written by the creator of *Dragontorc*, Steve Turner, it's described as 'basically a shoot 'em up with a bit of magic thrown in for good measure'. Street date is sometime in March.

If you were one of the disappointed who felt **Piranha**'s *Trap Door* should have been an Accolade, then fret no longer. Don Priestly, *Trapdoor*'s author, is currently developing a game which will make *Trapdoor* 'look like something out of the stone age'. Big, colourful graphics and amazing gameplay are on the cards. You can bet your bottom dollar that there'll be a preview as soon as possible. **Piranha**

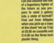
MORE (!) ON PAGE 106

CAUGHT IN A TRAP

Alligata have recently given the Amstrad market a conversion of **Z** – a scrolling shoot 'em up which was met with mixed opinions. They're now about to publish another conversion from a Commodore game – Tony Crowther's **Trap**. Alligata describe it as 'the thinking man's shoot 'em up'. There's a fair bit to do before the blasting can begin. A spacecraft must be selected and primed ready for use. Each craft has different capabilities – however, the choice will be dictated by your financial state.

Trap is split into three stages. The first is set in the far reaches of the galaxy where the fighter under your control must avoid or blast meteors that shower down into the scrolling spacescape. The action continues in the Zarkab valley, complete with rivers and rapids – a test of courage and intelligence. The final section places you far from your fighter on a distant plain – it's designed to test your stealth and determination on foot. The overall objective is to collect valuable orbs, the currency of the future, which will allow you to return to base and purchase a bigger and better fighter. It's then time to head off and blow the galaxy to pieces once more. I do like all this violence, don't you?

RICHARD EDDY


Can you assume the role of a legendary fighter of the future as you prepare to send a galaxy into a state of turmoil? Find out from Alligata when you pick up a copy of the shoot 'em up Trap at £8.95 on cassette and £14.95 on the three inch plastic thing.



Guide your fighter through the valley of Zarkab, avoiding the oncoming foes – who are out to send you headfirst into oblivion.



The valley of the Mud Monsters. See that pot on the far right hand side? That's the key to Dirk's escape.

Dragon's Lair II: Escape From Singe's Castle features another eight gruelling puzzles from where the last one left off (Pg 88). It's based on the original Dragon's Lair arcade game that featured animated cartoon drawings, and has been licensed by Software Projects for your Amstrad. It's out real soon at the singeing price of £8.95 on cassette and £14.95 on disk. Great Stuff.

BACK DOWN THE DUNGEONS

Just a short time ago (on page 88 to be precise) our hero, Dirk the Daring, rescued the gorgeous Damsel Daphne from Singe – the hideous dragon. Having returned Daphne to her father, Dirk decides to head back through Singe's lair to relieve the fiery one of his fortune in gold – buried deep in the Lizard King's domain.

And so the scene is set for Software Projects' follow up to **Dragon's Lair**, **Escape From Singe's Castle**. The original Dragon's Lair arcade machine included all of the sub-games that are contained in Dragon's Lair the computer game, parts one and two. As the mighty Singe was hacked off in the first game, the odious Lizard King has taken over the castle as his domain, and isn't too happy about any old hero coming to steal **his** new found wealth. And that, my little heroes, is what the game is all about – Money!

The first section in this eight part game is set in the river channels deep below the castle, and is split into two sub-games. In the first Dirk faces roaring waterfalls separated by boulders. The player's objective is to guide Dirk in his punt through the channels while avoiding the boulders. As there are various paths that Dirk's punt may take; the right one must obviously be selected unless you really want him to die. Luckily, the screen provides an indication of which route to take – but you'll have to act quick.

Level Two is set in a narrow alley, and sees Dirk being heavily pursued by a giant boulder. Although (as I write) none of the animation sequences are in operation, it is expected to work extremely well due to the Amstrad's capabilities of colour switching. Having escaped the boulder, Dirk finds himself in the Throne Room. Balls of electric power must be avoided before progressing onto the next stage: The Dungeon of The Lizard King.

From what I've heard, the fourth stage sounds pretty tricky. Dirk comes face to face with old Lizard features who must be mercilessly slaughtered. However, there are many other traps to overcome before Dirk can stick his sword into the slimy one.

Stage five sounds like a great bit of fantasy; you take the reigns of a magical flying horse hurtling down a forgotten tunnel whilst avoiding oncoming boulders – can't wait.

Doom Dungeon is the place for hideous torture. It's an apparently quiet room that suddenly explodes with bolts of lightning and mystical creatures that have to be avoided unless you want to be hero pie. The penultimate stage is dubbed Mystic Mosaic, and as you might guess it involves a mosaic pattern. Dirk's objective is to find the correct route through a chequered floor that continually disappears and reappears in segments – there is only one correct route.

The eighth and final screen is where Dirk comes face to face with the Mud Monsters.

Escape from Singe's Castle is near completion and we'll try for a review next month – I've been enthralled by this game on the Commodore and I can't wait for our version.

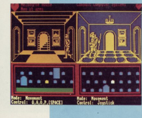
PHEW! WOT A SCORCHER!

The latest addition to Melbourne House's Amstrad stable is **Throne of Fire** by Mike Singleton, the author of Doomdark's Revenge. **Throne Of Fire** is a combat game played by two players against a computer opponent, or alternatively a lone player can take on two computer opponents – all playing simultaneously! It re-enacts a three-sided struggle between the sons of King Atherik, and is played against a backdrop depicting a burning Citadel. Each prince aims to seize the **Throne Of Fire** vacated by their late father, and your objective is to hack the other two to death so that you can achieve your burning desire of power.

The very nature of the struggle means that two players may team up against one before laying into each other – there's no such thing as fair play here. However, there is one further protagonist – an impartial one – who guards the **Throne Of Fire**. he must be overcome before you can claim full victory. There are promises of a high level of interaction, as while the threesome are battling it out there are other skirmishes taking place, and the relative forces of the three are constantly changing.

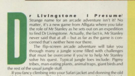
You'll find out whether the game is as stunning as it sounds when myself, Mass and Tony battle it out for ultimate power in the very near future.

RICHARD (once more unto the breach) EDDY



YOU PRESUME CORRECTLY, DEAR SIR.





Dr Livingstone I Presume? Strange name for an arcade adventure isn't it? No matter, it's a new game from Alligata where you take the role of Mr Stanley as he sets out on an expedition to find Dr Livingstone. Actually, the fact is, Mr Stanley never said that at all – but as far as the game is concerned that's neither here nor there.

The flip-screen arcade adventure will take you through many a jungle scene filled with challenges that must be overcome if you're to help Mr Stanley solve his quest. Typical jungle foes include: Pigmy tribes, man-eating plants, animal traps, giant birds and the rest of the usual jungle stuff.

If you fancy climbing into your Safari jacket and donning the old pith helmet, then you'll be able to start your expedition off March 3rd when the game goes on universal release.

RICHARD (Yes, me again) EDDY

Off for a trek through a hazardous jungle full of uncaring opposition that want to see Mr Stanley in the cooking pot. All this palava has been kicked up by Spanish programming team Operasoft – but you'll be able to obtain it over here, from Alligata, at the presuming price of £8.95 per cassette, or an extra six quid if you want it on disk.

Mr Stanley enters stage left, sees nasty jungle foes, hurriedly leaves via exit – stage right.

FROM(!) PAGE 103

are also chasing the licence to a cartoon with a view to producing a red hot comedy program on the same theme. I've promised them I won't reveal anything yet, but your starter for ten is – they won't make a Boo-Boo out of this one!

Piranha have also tied up **Delta Four** once more to write a spoof adventure for them. After ridiculing *The Hobbit* and *Robin Of Sherwood* they're turning to the *Great American Detective* for inspiration. That's still in the development process, but as soon as we get the full low-down you'll be the first to know.

Last month we previewed two of **Ariolasoft**'s Amanda Barry's front runners – *Ziggurat* and *Triaxos*. And I know I promised that they'd be reviewed this issue but, unfortunately, they weren't quite finished when we went to press. We'll have 'em ready for you next month. Honest.

Apart from that, Amanda has the grand total of eight front runners coming in the next few months. The two that'll be with you ever-so-soon are *Killer Ring* which will be on their **Reactor** label. Written by **Byte Engineers**, a new team of programmers, the Amstrad version is arriving courtesy of Ross Goodley. *The Bride Of Frankenstein* is a really scary game – preview next issue.

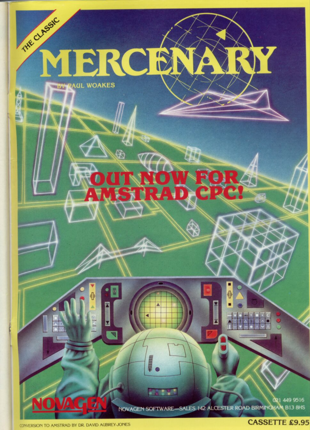
Centurians and *Challenge Of The Gobots* are two cartoon licences. *Centurians* is presently being redesigned after the original idea fell through, and *Gobots* is 'progressing'. **Ariola** have a shoot 'em up coming up – *Zarjazz* is the name and it's totally . . . utterly . . . zarjazz! Following that there's *Starburst* – another shoot 'em up using a split screen to provide two views.

If you were a fan of **Century Hutchinson**'s *Fourth Protocol*, you'll be pleased to hear that they're bringing out a game of a similar style. *Their Finest Hour* is a war game set in The Battle Of Britain where the player takes the role of an Operations Controller at an airfield. The game is purely icon driven in a similar fashion to *The Fourth Protocol*.

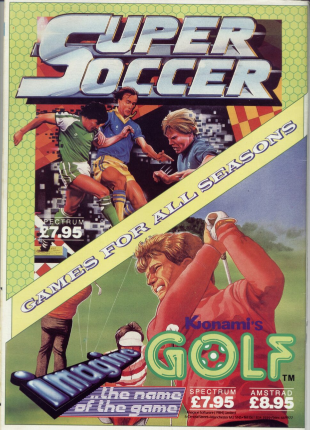
The programming company, **Starlight** are also being handled by **Ariolasoft**. Their first release has been dubbed *Greyfell*, and features a cute pussy cat as the central character – Sheesh.

With space rapidly running out it's time for a budget mention of **Mastertronic**'s projects for the next couple of months. *Feud* is the one nearest to completion, and if you're lucky there'll be a review next issue. Others include *Amarat*, *Rasterscan* and *Colony*, all written by **Binary Design** the team famed for *Zub*. Also on the cards are *Invasion UK*, *How to be a Hero* and *Stormbringer* which continues *Magic Knight*'s adventures after their previous smash hit – *Knight Tyme*. That's your lot for this month. There will be more news next time around, with some reviews and previews of the games mentioned here. Sleep well.

RICHARD (Can I go home now?) EDDY



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